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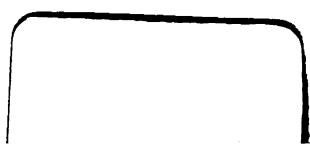
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MY ESCAPE FROM HYDROPATHY.

London: 1890.

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OF

LIGHT AND AMUSING LITERATURE

FOR

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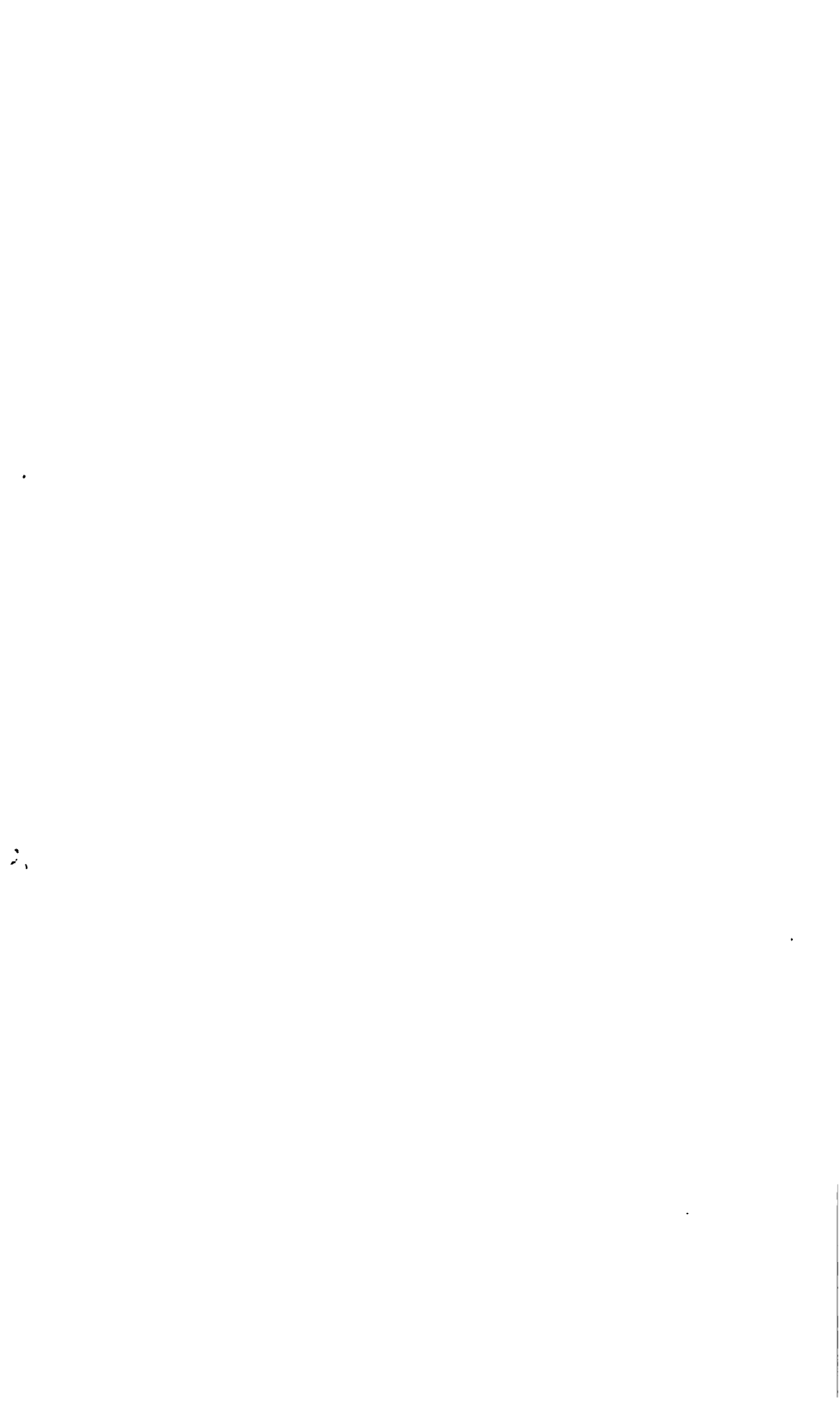
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LONDON SOCIETY.

JANUARY, 1867.



PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES.

CHAPTER I.

MISS TALBOT COMES HOME.

THERE was very little light left in the sky on the cold, murky, January night on which this story commences. The moon was young and easily overshadowed, and, though the first watch of the night was given to the 'red planet Mars,' he kept it unseen by the citizens of London. Fog, in fact, reigned supreme, when the girl who is to play the first part in this drama got out of a respectable-looking brougham at the door of a tall house in Victoria Street, Westminster, and prepared to enter it, and upon the career through which we shall follow her.

The broad blaze of light which

fell out to meet and welcome her, as it were, dazzled her for an instant as she went up the steps and into the hall—a hall that, in the language of advertisements, was really of palatial proportions, and up from which a spiral staircase curved away into space. A fire burnt in a huge stove in the centre, and a burly porter sat in a huge chair by the door of this hall. Altogether there was a discomposing air of magnitude about everything, that was oppressive to a tired traveller who found herself in London for the first time in her life.

'I am Miss Talbot; can I have

come to the right house?' she asked, quickly, of a grim-looking servant in grey livery, who had come out on the step to meet her. And he conveyed to her mind the fact that she had come to the right house; that it 'would be well for her to walk upstairs, and that master would be home to dinner in half an hour,' in the low tones and succinct manner of well-trained servitude.

Co-existent with the oppression, there had been a sense of elation at the size and splendour of this home to which she had come. But the elation vanished as she mounted flight after flight of the broad, cold, clean stone stairs; and it was borne in upon her mind, through the agency of several brass plates on several doors, that many families were resident in this mansion; and that it was a fair pedestrian feat to mount from the street-door to the topmost 'flat,' where her brother, to whom she had come home, dwelt in bachelor freedom and comfort, which he was about to break up for her sake.

Elation was her portion again when she came into the brightly-lighted, thickly-carpetted hall, and caught glimpses, through open doors, of several luxuriously-furnished rooms. There was an atmosphere of more than comfort over the home Edgar Talbot had prepared for his sister. There was refinement, elegance, — 'warmth and colour,' too—or she, with her warm and glowing tastes, would not have sympathized with it all so suddenly as she did, even while walking along leisurely to the room that was at once pointed out to her as hers, and seeming to glance carelessly about her.

She enjoyed it all with such a hearty, young, strong appreciation. Enjoyed it for itself, without giving much thought to the possible motive which had brought it about. For a few minutes, as she stood between two subtly-adjusted glasses that reflected her own perfect figure and all the delicate appointments of the room, she forgot that a brother, whom she had never seen to remember, was coming home to

dinner in half an hour. Then she reminded herself of it and the old adage about first impressions; and then she went on to attire herself for the meeting, with all the kindest memories of him which she could collect, and by reorganizing her dress.

There had been little plot, little incident, little action in her life as yet. Twenty years ago she had been left (a baby of two) to the care of an old maiden aunt of her mother's. The latter had lapsed out of life soon after the death of her husband; who in turn had died after a feeble wrestle with fever in Calcutta, leaving four children, for whom he provided as follows:

To his eldest son, Edgar Talbot, he left the whole of his business and personal property, charged with the following legacies and bequests, viz:—

To his widow, 150*l.* per annum only, 'because her tastes were simple, and more would be unnecessary.'

To Lionel Talbot, his second son, five thousand pounds, and a recommendation to go into the army when he should be old enough.

To Marian Talbot, his eldest daughter, one thousand pounds and her mother's jewels.

To Beatrix Talbot, his youngest daughter,—not even so much as a mention.

There were many reasons assigned at the time for this cruel and unjust caprice, by people who knew nothing about it. Men said that old Talbot must have had good cause for making such an invidious exception with regard to the baby Beatrix; and Mrs. Talbot heard the sayings in silence, and bent her already bowed head still lower, and offered no one an explanation. Hard words and harder suspicions were bruited abroad, even in the first days of her widowhood, about the pale pretty woman who had meekly borne the burden of being old Talbot's wife for thirteen or fourteen years, and who now could not be got to declare that there was anything unfair in a will that not only left her youngest child and herself paupers, but that put them under a heavy cloud. Without demur, or repining,

or reproach, she accepted the position, and let evil tongues wag unchecked, unchid, till her boys' guardians relieved her of their charge. Then she brought her daughters home to the house of her aunt in the English country, and presently faded away under the influence of the cloud which had no silver lining.

The children's guardians had removed Marian from that quiet old home at her mother's death. But Beatrix had been suffered to remain on—there were no instructions about her. Marian went to school, and grew and prospered; and at nineteen—five or six years before the opening of this story—'married very comfortably,' every one said, and she never contradicted them; and, together with the rest of the Talbots, concurred in forgetting the little outcast down at Stoke Basing—who had, meanwhile, developed from the baby Bee into a beautiful girl, known as Miss Talbot throughout that country-side. A girl from whom the shadow cast by her father's neglect was lifted as soon as she was looked upon. A bright, brave, thoroughbred creature, who had grown into every feminine grace without care or culture, or consideration from the brothers and sister who were but names to her.

When their mother died, the 150*l*. which had been left by the Calcutta merchant to his widow for her life, was still, by the clemency of the managers of Edgar's fortune, remitted quarterly for the benefit of the child, for whom no provision had been made. The same arrangement continued after Edgar attained his majority, and took matters into his own hands. On this 150*l*. Beatrix was a princess amongst the people of Stoke Basing. It provided her with every comfort—more—with every luxury of which she had ever heard. As a child, it gave her a pony, and music, and dancing, and drawing-lessons,—'the best the neighbourhood afforded,' her aunt, old Miss Lenox, was wont to assert. As a grown-up girl, it gave her freedom from the miseries of small economies, a riding-horse, and little basket - phaeton; a considerable

power of relieving the want and squalor which abounded in that flourishing agricultural parish, and a certain independence with regard to her old aunt—an independence which showed itself in a bright, cheery toleration for whims and querulous manifestations of authority, which would have been irksome to the point of non-endurance, had the girl not felt that it was within her power to break her bonds at any time.

For Miss Lenox was not at all the ideal aged relative of romance. She was a hard-mannered, good, conscientious, narrow-minded woman, who, though she would have charged herself with her niece's child at any cost and under any circumstances, never failed to count the former and bewail the latter as amongst her many crosses. There was compensation in the conviction Miss Lenox had, that these (the crosses) were giving her a high place among the elect of Stoke Basing. And there was consolation in the reflection that the cost would have been greater, and the circumstances more lamentable, had Beatrix had nothing a year of her own, instead of 150*l*.

On the whole it must be confessed that it was merely the sorrow of surprise and uncertainty—merely the shock one feels at any long-continued habit of living being abruptly rent asunder, which Beatrix Talbot experienced when old Miss Lenox died. The great difference the event would make in her life did not present itself to her mind. She was conscious, vaguely, that it would necessitate some alteration in her mode of living. She would want fewer servants and a smaller house; she would want some one to spend the long winter evenings with her; and—there her plans became wavy, and she felt that she would need to consult some friend, and knew that she had none whose counsel she could care to take.

But before the funeral day came Beatrix was relieved of the responsibility of herself. Her eldest brother, Edgar, wrote to her and offered her a home with him, in words that read like an order. She was to go to him as soon as she

could conveniently pack up her own personal belongings; and she was 'to believe that henceforth her happiness and welfare would be the chief objects in life of her affectionate brother,

'EDGAR TALBOT.'

She was very glad to believe that, or anything else that sounded kind in those early days of the desolation that always sets in after the death of any one—glad to believe it, and anxious to go up and verify it. She was on the point of doing the latter (she hoped) when we parted from her just now.

She had done away with every trace of travel-stain and weariness when she came out from her room in response to a communication she received that Mr. Talbot was waiting for her in the drawing-room. It was natural to her to be careful and fastidious, and to study the becoming at all times, and she had never felt the obligation upon her to obey this natural instinct so strongly as she did to-night. 'I should like him to think me nice at once,' she thought, as she moved along to the meeting, alternately depressed by the fear that her brother might find her rustic and uncultivated, and cheered by the memory of the last look in the glass.

As she went into the room, a gentleman, a young man of nine-and-twenty or thirty, came forward to meet her. He kissed her on the forehead, hoped they should get on well together, and then held her off to 'have a look at what the baby Bee had grown into,' as he said. This was what he saw—

A girl rather above the middle height, yet not tall, splendidly and fully formed, rounded and finely developed, deep-chested, broad-shouldered, slender-wristed. A girl with just so much sway about her when she walked as was suggestive of action unfettered by tight clothing. A girl who had the art of standing perfectly erect without looking stiff—a combination, in short, of perfect health, grace, and freedom.

Her perfection of outline, her rare symmetry of form, took the eyes of

the man who advanced to meet her, and chained them away from her face for a moment or two. But when she held back a little, still with her hands in his grasp, and lifted her eyes and told him she was glad to be with him—her brother—at last; when she did this, he saw that the graceful promise of beauty which had been given him by the first glimpse of her was gloriously fulfilled. She was a superb, glowing-hued beauty, rich in the gracious colouring of chestnut hair and violet eyes; very perfect in feature, too—not with the perfection of aquiline regularity, but with the more winning loveliness that goes with a nose that is straight in itself, and still not straight down from the forehead,—and with richly-red laughing lips, that were quicker to part or pout than to adapt themselves to the prunes and prism' forms,

As Edgar Talbot looked down into the well-opened, fearless eyes; as he marked the expression that swept over her face as she felt the intensity of his observation—an expression that was a queer combination of blush, and frown, and smile—he read a portion of her character, and recognized all her beauty. There was plenty of pride, plenty of self-possession, and plenty of self-will in this country-nurtured sister of his. She looked as if she could be very devoted and very defiant, if she were called upon to be either. He liked her very much already. Liked her for the good looks that would surely make her remarkable; liked the turn of her head, and the tone of her clear full voice; liked her for being so unmistakably a gentlewoman, that even his fastidious taste could find no fault with anything save the density of her mourning dress.

There was little likeness between them: still, had you been prepared for it by the knowledge that they were brother and sister, a faint resemblance would have made itself manifest. His hair was the same colour as hers, but without the wave that made hers luxuriant, or the reflections that made it rich. His eyes were grey—sensible, thoughtful, kind, but never soft in

their glances. He was a tall, well-formed man, but he stooped, and so lost a little both in height and air. He was quiet in manner, quiet in voice, quiet in style. Beatrix, to whom his occupation in life was as unknown as his local habitation had been before this day, put him down for a follower of one or other of the sage professions of law or physic. He had very much the look, to her, of one who was wont to give advice and to have it taken. His tones—though his voice was low and unmarked by inflection—were quick, prompt, decided. Beatrix had been accompanied on the journey up from Stoke Basing by anticipations of liberty, equality, fraternity. These anticipations fled as he led her in to dinner, and planted her on a chair at the head of his table, and generally took care and command of her.

Gradually, as the dinner went on, Edgar Talbot evoked some old memories about their father and mother, and their old home in Calcutta, that had the effect of making Beatrix feel that, once upon a time, there had been a link, however slight, between them.

'I can just, and only just remember mamma,' Beatrix said, in response. 'It may be only that I think I can remember her, from having heard aunt Lenox talk about her so much. Her hair used to be loose and soft, and to hang over her face a good deal.'

'I have no doubt it did,' Edgar answered, as a vision of what used to strike his tight, neat young mind as untidiness in his mother crossed his memory. 'Marian is very like her mother; she will be here to see you to-morrow.'

'And Lionel?'

'Lionel will come in by-and-by. I asked him to dine with us, but he is very much engaged just now with a friend of his who is ill.'

'What are they like—Marian and Lionel?'

'Marian is a charming woman, I believe. Every one who has nothing to do with her is quite delighted with Mrs. Sutton. But you will have much to do with her, naturally; therefore I warn you, Beatrix,

Marian is a fool, and a dangerous one.'

'And Lionel?'

'Lionel and I don't look upon life in the same way, but for all that, I know him to be one of the best fellows that ever breathed.'

And, for the first time, there was a touch of feeling in Mr. Talbot's voice.

'He is in the army, is he not?' Beatrix asked.

'In an army the ranks of which are rather too crowded for there to be much chance of speedy promotion. He is an artist, and a clever one, too.'

'And now tell me about Mr. Sutton, Edgar,' Beatrix said, calling her brother by his Christian name for the first time.

'Mr. Sutton is—Marian's husband. His mission in life is to be always on the look-out to save his wife from the consequences of her own folly, and to do it without being detected. For a few weeks you will be very much thrown with Marian. I am sorry to say it is unavoidable; and I tell you again, that you must be careful with her.'

'Why?'

'It is almost impossible to put you on guard against the precise form of mischief she may work. Once accept the fact of her being false, even when there is not the remotest possibility of her gaining anything by it, and you will be all right. You will soon be independent of her. I have secured an unexceptionable chaperone for you.'

'Will she live here?—with us?' Beatrix asked, in a dismayed tone. She had indulged in a dream of an existence which the presence of an unexceptionable chaperone would most surely mar. She had designed being companion, sympathiser, friend, to this brother, who had given her a proper home at last—a place in the family from which fate had hitherto debarred her. It was disheartening to hear that another was coming to share the home, and possibly rule her.

'Of course she will live here,' Mr. Talbot replied, laughing. 'My dear girl, you did not imagine that, in our position, you could be left

to take yourself into society, did you?"

'Shall I not go with you, Edgar? I really know nothing about it remember, only I thought——'

'That you could live a life of picturesque independence in London. No, no; you will soon see the advantage as well as the necessity of having Mrs. Lyon with you.'

For a few moments Bestrix struggled against the conviction that she should not soon see either the advantages or the necessity of the invader; then, even to herself, she seemed to conquer it. It was flattering that her brother should have such a high sense of what was due to her, that he seemed bent on using all the precautions in his power that might aid in placing her well. Or was it a high sense of what was due to himself only? She had no time to consider the question, for, immediately as it arose, Mr. Lionel Talbot was announced, and her store of family interests and feelings was at once increased.

Her heart went out affectionately to this second brother on the instant, as, just placing a hand on Edgar's shoulder in passing, Lionel came up and greeted her with a loving kindness that brought her nearer to him at once than she ever could be to Edgar, she felt. He looked as he was, several years the junior of Mr. Talbot. There was still a good deal of boyish frankness in his face, and boyish fervour in his manner, and boyish freshness in his heart. Life had been no battle to the handsome, hopeful, yellow-haired young artist. He had never sought a mean or low reward for the works of the pencil that was as dear to him as his soul, since it was the deft exponent of the latter. All his life had been spent in the exercise of the art he loved; and the labour had never been fitfully brightened by the thought of what it might bring him. He practised it unremittingly, and it brought him a great deal; but it was ever the means to which he sacrificed, not the result. He was utterly devoid of what is popularly called ambition concerning it. The hope of being widely and well named had never entered into his considera-

tion; and had it done so, would have had no charms for him. The lofty beauty of the art he adored could receive no additional grace had a million tongues wagged in honour of such proficiency as he had attained. So he thought, and so he acted; keeping the faith he had in it pure and undefiled by any poor schemings for success, or paltry strivings after commendation, publicity, or reward.

A character lacking in energy, perhaps,—in the energy, that is, that belongs to this period, urging each one madly to the fore, at any cost of conscience as regards the manner of his work, under the impression not so much that the devil will take the hindmost, as that the hindmost must be a poor and pitiful failure, whom the devil will not find it worth his while to take. Lacking in that energy, unquestionably, and yet full of the better sort that does not flag in oblivion; full of the perseverance that has, over and over again, won the loftiest rewards, and that remains the best proof of the truth of the statement that the race is not always to the swift: a character that possessed those grand ingredients of strength, a power of waiting, a patience that would not be worn out, and an earnestness of purpose that made him seek out and practice whatever was true, whether it were telling or not.

Withal, no self-appointed apostle of a possibly purer creed than his fellows practised and avowed; but a bright-hearted man, who unconsciously impressed others through the agency of the inborn trust he had in truth in every conceivable form. The sentiment Edgar had expressed was a very general one about Lionel Talbot. 'Lionel and I don't look upon life in the same way; but, for all that, I know him to be one of the best fellows that ever breathed,' was the unspoken thought of most men whose ways of life were much with the young painter who was playing for high stakes almost unwittingly.

'Affectionate as he is to me, and honestly glad as he is to see me, I wonder he never found me out at

Stoke Basing, Beatrix thought. Then she worded her wonder—his clear blue eyes, his open brow, and the smiling lips which the yellow moustache partially concealed, invited confidence.

'I have spent my life in Germany and Italy,' he answered. 'I only came to England a month ago, Beatrix. I am almost as great a stranger to Edgar and Marian as you can be.'

Then he talked to Beatrix of what she knew of literature and art, and found she knew a great deal very imperfectly. And when they spoke of music, she gave him the result of the Stoke Basing instruction; and as she sang bright airs faultily and brilliantly, Edgar Talbot congratulated himself on having fulfilled an obvious duty, and at the same time drawn a card that could not fail to win the prize for which he had long been playing—position and place for the family of which he was the chief representative.

'What is Edgar?' Beatrix asked, abruptly, pausing in her play once, when Mr. Talbot had been summoned to speak to some one on business.

'He is on the Stock Exchange,' Lionel replied.

'It's like gambling, is it not?' she interrogated; but Lionel only replied by putting another song before her, and showing her how to sing it.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. SUTTON IS FRANK.

'Marian is going to call on you at two—she will take you for a drive if you will go,' Mr. Talbot said to his sister the following morning, as she came into the dining-room. He was standing up, with his hat in his hand. 'I could not wait for you,' he explained, hurriedly. 'You will not mind breakfasting alone I hope?' 'Oh no—not this morning; but I'll get up in future, and breakfast with you, Edgar.'

'Or perhaps you would rather have it in your dressing-room? I am often a good deal taken up with letters. Will you mind meeting

Marian alone? Shall I take you round to her house, and introduce you, or will you wait for her here?' 'I will wait for her here.'

'I'm glad to hear you say so—glad that you didn't feel called upon to sham sentiment about it. Well, good-bye, dear!' He stooped and kissed her. 'Take care of yourself.'

She put her hand on his shoulder, to detain him, as she answered—

'Thank you, Edgar, very much.'

'For what?'

'For caring for me so. I like it—oh! I like it so much—it is new to me.'

'My dear girl! you will have it in your power to do more for me, unless you disappoint me greatly, than I ever can for you.'

'How? Tell me.'

'In a thousand ways, that you will learn in time; and, eventually, by such a marriage as Miss Talbot ought to make, and you will easily make.'

'You don't want to get rid of me yet?' she asked, laughing. 'I had a vision, as I travelled up yesterday, of keeping house for you, as Ruth Pinch did for her brother.'

'And of passing happy hours over the construction of a similar pie to that immortal one that brought about "her fate," as you would call it, I suppose? No; you're not the Ruth Pinch or Dame Durden type of woman, Beatrix—thank heaven for it!'

He went away now, laughing and nodding to her, gayer at heart and in gait than he had been for years. There was something very enlivening to the keen young business-man in the sight of that beautiful girl sitting there, leaning her elbow on the table, resting her chin in her hand—something enlivening in the sight of her, and reassuring in the recollection that she was his sister. He had never had youthful companionship in his home before. There was a fair promise of good refreshing interest in the presence of one so full of the glory of life as he saw her to be. As he went away he congratulated himself heartily. 'She has the best gift a woman can have—beauty—luckily for me,' he

thought; and then he reflected with pleasure that Mrs. Lyon would soon aid him in bringing that beauty well into the light of day.

'I hope what I have said to her will neutralize anything Marian may tell her about Blanche; for Mrs. Sutton is safe to shoot her little bolt at Miss Lyon,' he muttered, as he passed clear out of the home atmosphere, on his way to a very different one. Then he was soon joined by other men, and his mind became absorbed in some other tickets which he had drawn or might draw in the lottery of life. He was aware of a sort of exultation in his own mind as he went along—an exultation that the majority of men must experience more or less frequently—a sense of there being a great deal to be got out of that portion of his life which was outside his home. Many of his ends could be furthered by his sister Beatrix, if her will would go with his—many others were utterly beyond, entirely above (he almost believed) her aid and understanding.

Additionally, away in the most secret corner of his heart, he had an interest that no one could share with him—a hope that was fitfully bright and feverishly warm, and that was at once the sweetest and most painful element of his life—a love that fought with every determination and resolve he had ever made. Up to the present he knew himself to be well fenced in from a danger that was dear to him; but in the weakness of over-reliance on his own strength, he was going to lay down his arms, open the gates of the citadel, and let in an enemy whom he believed to be unconscious of her own prowess, and so innocuous. He had given himself a great many beautiful reasons for this rash step; he had called it duty towards a too long neglected sister, and earnest desire to see her so well brought forward as to ensure her own happiness and his aggrandizement in the future. But when all the beautiful reasons were given, and blindly accepted by himself, the truth remained. He sighed for the frequent sight of a woman who had stamped herself upon his soul and

made him love her—sighed, yearned, thirsted for her presence, though he never meant to do more than sun himself in it while he could; and knew that when it was withdrawn he should perish in the chill which must ensue. And the woman he loved was Blanche Lyon, for the sake of whose strange glances he had secured, at an absurd outlay of time, money, and false reasoning, her mother's services as chaperone for his sister.

The day wore itself away rapidly. Two o'clock, and the immediate prospect of Mrs. Sutton's call was upon Beatrix before she had learnt the rooms and reorganized them, as women with taste are sure to want to reorganize what has been solely the realm of the upholsterer heretofore. Her brother Edgar had given her a hint upon the subject of the densely-mourning dress, and she had taken the hint, and changed it this morning for a tight well-fitting one of black silk, that fell from her waist in large folds. She had hoped that Lionel would have come to help her through the ordeal of the first interview with her sister Marian; and, had he done so, she had intended taking his opinion about a little ornament or an utter absence of it. It was an important question, and she gave it much consideration. Should she wear jet, or plain, rather dull gold; or should she abstain from either, and rely upon a rigid little set of linen collar and cuffs for producing the right effect on this unknown sister, Mrs. Sutton, whom she (Beatrix) had already taught herself to regard as a species of butterfly. It was an inspiration direct from the guardian angel of the millinery interest which made her fasten herself together at the throat and wrists finally with dull gold knobs. For they suited her; and though Mrs. Sutton never liked women for looking well, she invariably behaved better to them when they did so.

Miss Talbot was not affected to the point of either anxiety or enthusiasm by the anticipation of her sister's visit. There would be a certain amount of interest, the girl felt, in the study a lady, against

whom Edgar had come out of his quiet reserve to warn her, would offer. But beyond this curiosity there was nothing. Natural affection requires more cultivation, perhaps, than any other good quality.

Still Miss Talbot was not insensible to the fact of there being a deeper flush on her cheeks, and a brighter light in her eyes than usual, when the door opened and a lady came fluttering in—a lady with a small pale fair face, which was adorned with half-closed large blue eyes, and nut-brown brows and lashes, and a pert little delicately-pointed turn-up nose, and a flexible, refined, wide mouth, over which the most subtly-sweet smile played. A lady with fascination legibly inscribed on every lineament; fascination that drugged the reasoning faculties of the majority who met her, and deadened them to the first keen irresistible impression of her being a false, treacherous, dangerous creature.

'I am Marian,' she said, putting her hands out to meet her sister; 'and I am very proud to feel that there can be no doubt about your being Trixy.'

The abbreviation was not a familiar one to pretty Mrs. Sutton, but she had made up her mind that her sister should get spoken about as Trixy Talbot. So she uttered the name now as if it had been wont to fall glibly off her tongue many and many a year ago, in their days of guileless innocence and infantine communion.

Mrs. Sutton had a shrilly-sweet voice, and she had it well under command, too. It said little tender things about the joy this reunion with Beatrix afforded her very tenderly; and little sad semi-self-reproachful things about never having known Beatrix before very sadly. After those soft, clear, pathetic inflections, Beatrix's voice sounded deep and full in her own ears, as she answered—

'Never mind about the non-intercourse of the past, Marian; we must make up for it in the future. So you're married? and I have stupidly gone on thinking of you as a mere child.'

'I was a mere child when I married,' Mrs. Sutton replied, with a gorgeous disregard of the fact of her sister knowing very well that she (Marian) had been nothing of the kind. 'I was a mere child when I married, but the five years have made me an old woman.'

She sank her voice as she said it, and lowered her head, and seemed to be flushing, and struggling with an inclination to cry. On the whole she looked surprisingly young and innocent, and Beatrix settled at once that Edgar 'had been very much mistaken.'

'Ah! you must tell me about Mr. Sutton,' Miss Talbot exclaimed, eagerly. The eagerness was as much the result of her desire to check Marian's tears as it was to know more of the other member of her family.

Marian lifted the graceful head, that was covered with black lace and crimson roses, and nutbrown hair, in a way that rendered it difficult to determine where nature ended and art began, and shook out a gentle sensitive laugh, by way of recovering from the emotion she had been displaying. 'You will soon see him; he is very kind—older than I am, you know. Edgar has told you about my marriage?'

Mrs. Sutton glanced sharply at her sister as she asked the question, lowering her lashes and glinting out through them in a way that ought always to make the interrogated very careful. The only impression it conveyed to Miss Talbot was, that her sister was short-sighted.

'No, nothing; remember, I only came to him last night. You tell me about your marriage, yourself, Marian; I shall like to hear it?'

'Better than I shall like to tell it, perhaps,' Mrs. Sutton answered, softly, with a saintly and resigned expression flitting over her variable face. She looked now like a Madonna, Beatrix thought—a Madonna in rich grey velvet and sables, and with a piquant turn-up nose, but still a Madonna. The girl's sympathies were aroused, her kind heart went out in a wave of pity for the possible sorrow so gently borne.

'Marian! only tell me what it

will be pleasant for you to tell,' she said, quickly; and Marian had to turn her head aside as she smiled over Miss Talbot's graphically-expressed power of being easily deceived.

'Then I shall tell you nothing of my marriage or the manner of it,' Mrs. Sutton said, presently, bringing her head round again, with a little air of making the best of things that was 'eminently well-bred,' Beatrix thought. 'I can't bring it as a sacrifice, certainly, for I did it with my eyes wide open; but I was very young, and didn't know what I was undertaking to endure, and Edgar—but I must be careful how I speak of Edgar to you.'

Beatrix leant forward in her chair, and clasped her hands together, and wrung them hard in a small excitement.

'Yes, you must be careful,' she said, ringing out her words with a bright, proud decision, that Mrs. Sutton (for all her subtle inflections) never knew. 'You must be careful—if Edgar has been to blame don't blame him to me; let me love him without a shadow of doubt. He has been the one to bring me back to my own—my own must not set me against him in ever so small a degree.'

Oh, Trixy! set you against him; would I do it? Why I shrink from doing what would be the greatest comfort to me—talking over things with another woman—a sister—because I won't say a word about Edgar that might possibly make you think him less kind than I'd like you to think him.'

'Marian!'

It was only one word. But Beatrix Talbot uttered it, and Marian Sutton heard it, and both these women had a marvellous power of expressing and understanding. There was reproach and condemnation for the invidious onslaught on a brother in the single word which the one sister said to the other. And all the reproach and condemnation was meant and felt.

'Then don't ask me a word about my marriage,' Mrs. Sutton replied, 'but put on your bonnet and come out for a drive with me. What has

I hear said to you about your milliner, and the thousand other people you must see at once?'

'Nothing,' Beatrix answered, laughing. 'I don't want anything. Thanks to everybody's goodness in letting me keep what was left to poor mamma, I don't come to Edgar in rags and tatters.'

'Nothing! he has said nothing; how very inconsiderate of him. I suppose though he relied on me to direct you. You might just as well be in rags and tatters, as far as your dress is concerned, dear; a fact of which you might have remained happily unconscious had you stayed in the country, but to which you cannot be blind now you are in town. We will go to my dressmaker as we come home from the Park. Hortense will bless me for bringing you to her, you are just the figure to do her credit. You had better take some money with you.'

Mrs. Sutton uttered this last sentence quite with an air of its being an after-thought. 'You are sure to see so many things you will want,' she said, in an explanatory tone; 'so many little things at shops where I am not known. However, if it is not convenient, my purse is at your service.'

This last speech was a bold stroke of consummate diplomacy. It advertised Mrs. Sutton's generosity at the same time that it gauged Miss Talbot's means. Nor was it altogether false. Marian's purse was very much at her sister's service, more especially as there was nothing in it.

'Thanks—many of them—but I have my last quarter's allowance,' Trixy replied. So Mrs. Sutton advised her to take some of it, 'say twenty pounds,' and Miss Talbot took it.

'We are not likely to see many people I know in the Park now,' Mrs. Sutton said, as they fell in with the thin string of carriages—the speech might have been made with equal truth at any time of year; but this Beatrix did not know, and so it sounded in her ears as if all Mrs. Sutton's friends and acquaintances were away at their respective country-houses, which was precisely the

way Mrs Sutton wished it to sound —‘so we will only just drive round and look at the Row (you ride?), and then it will be time to go to Hortense.’

The Row was deserted, consequently Beatrix neither was nor seemed to be impressed by it. ‘What a dull place to waste one’s time on horseback in,’ she said, leaning forward to look up the vista, that is unquestionably more striking in June than in January. ‘If I ride, it will not be there.’

Mrs. Sutton laughed. ‘My dear Trixy, if you ride it will be there, and nowhere else.’

‘Why?’

‘Because Edgar will not consider your riding there a waste of time, and you will soon learn that Edgar’s wishes are not to be disregarded.’

Mrs. Sutton sighed as she finished, and held her throat straight, and bent her head slightly on one side, and looked altogether as if she spoke from sorrowful experience. Beatrix began to develop uneasy sensations of doubt respecting the possible mode by which Edgar had brought about the excellent marriage of his eldest sister, whose fate seemed not altogether shadowless. Even while she was thinking this Mrs. Sutton pulled the check-string, and gave the order, ‘Madame Hortense’s,’ in a tinkling tone; and as they neared Bond Street, where Hortense, the Muse of Fashion, dwelt, Marian’s spirits rose visibly, until Beatrix hoped that Mr. Sutton was not so bad as she had first feared.

‘You will excuse me for dragging you away from the Park so soon, will you not?’ Mrs. Sutton asked, as they ascended to the audience-chamber of the clever little Frenchwoman who had gained the reputation of giving an unmistakable ‘air’ to any dress which she deigned to take into her little wiry, brown hands. ‘You will, I know,’ Mrs. Sutton added, ‘when I tell you that I have been in terror the whole time about a dress that Mr. Sutton will have me wear to-morrow night. If it is not finished I shall not dare to face him.’

‘Why not?’ Beatrix asked, wonderingly.

‘I can hardly explain: well, I will be frank with you, as it is my nature to be with every one. He will ask me why Hortense did not exert herself to finish it; and I shall have to tell him that Hortense does not make efforts unless her account is kept very close.’

Then Hortense came in, and, after much conversation carried on between Mrs. Sutton and the dress-maker, in a low tone in a corner, Marian returned to Beatrix, who was at the far-off end of the room, and said, meekly—

‘Come along, dear,’ and sighed.

‘Is your dress to be ready?’ Trixy whispered.

‘Oh, no!’ Mrs. Sutton answered, aloud. ‘She says if I could give her twenty pounds’ (Beatrix’s hand was in her pocket in an instant); ‘but I cannot, and she knows it.’

‘Marian, do oblige me.’ Miss Talbot’s voice, and manner, and blush, were all strongly indicative of her desire that her sister should avail herself of the contents of the purse so eagerly extended. Mrs. Sutton hesitated; then took the purse and hand together, and clasped them affectionately, and said that she ‘really could not—unless Trixy was quite sure—’

Trixy was quite sure of everything that might conduce to the speedy surrendering of her money to her sister. Her arguments were overwhelming, and prevailed. She had nine or ten pounds more at home; she wanted nothing herself; it would make her miserable to think that Marian should risk her husband’s anger, when a little confidence in her sister’s wish to help her would avert it. Mrs. Sutton was amenable to reason. She accepted the loan, and once more with Hortense retired to settle the delicate business out of earshot.

The subject of their conversation would have been puzzling to Trixy, had she heard it. It was to the following effect.—‘Now, look here, Hortense,’ the lady began, in an animated whisper, crumpling up the notes and handing them to the dressmaker, ‘here are twenty pounds: you are sure the seven yards will be enough?’

The seven yards would make the dress an object which Madame Hortense could view with pleasure when she delivered it up to its possessor; but without that lace (at three pounds a yard) it would have been a thing that it would have cost her anguish to send home. But, about the pound that Madame Sutton could not pay now?

Mrs. Sutton's voice was a little less sweet than usual, as she denounced the exacting deity of dress 'as a dreadful screw.' 'Put it on to the bill; of course it will be paid.'

'But when?'

'Oh! soon—directly. Consider how much of my money you have had, and do not distress me for it, there is a good creature. Besides, I have brought you a charming new customer; my sister will have more to waste on you than I ever have had.'

'Would the young lady give an order now?'

'Mrs. Sutton felt sure that the young lady would do so; and forthwith Beatrix was fallen upon suavely by Madame Hortense, and sweetly by Marian, and entreated for 'her own sake,' and more important still, for the sake of pleasing her brother Edgar, to order such a dress as would not distort her figure, which Hortense hastened to assure her was superb.

'It must be quite plain black silk then,' she said, laughing, as she rose up and prepared to pass a perilous time under the hands of Hortense. Then, when she had been fitted, and so brought into a proper state of subjection, she was casually informed that the dress would be from ten to fifteen pounds; and her face burnt as she saw Marian lift her delicate brows in contemptuous astonishment at the start of annoyance which she (Beatrix) had been unable to repress at the sound of the sum.

'I do not think I shall deal much with your Hortense, Marian,' Miss Talbot said, as they rode away from the dressmaker's door. And Marian answered, with an accent of self-reproach—

'If I had not borrowed that money of you, you would not have this feeling, Trixy.'

'Well, perhaps not,' Trixy replied, honestly; 'because, you see, I should then have been able to pay for the dress I do not want; and now I shall not be able to do it unless Edgar——'

'For my sake, do not say a word to Edgar about lending it to me,' Mrs. Sutton exclaimed, piteously. 'He would be harsh, and tell my husband, and then——'

Mrs. Sutton shuddered, and stopped; and the shudder and silence were more eloquent than any spoken words could have been.

'Indeed I will not, Marian,' Miss Talbot said, heartily; 'do rely upon me.'

And Mrs. Sutton recovered her spirits again, promised to do so, and changed the topic by asking—

'How do you like the idea of the Lyons coming to live with you?'

'The Lyons?—Am I to have more than one duenna?' Miss Talbot asked.

'Oh! Edgar has not mentioned Blanche Lyon to you, then?'

Marian smiled significantly, and gave her head a little shake, as if Edgar's reticence on the point had been clearly foreseen by her.

'No, not a word; is she Mrs. Lyon's daughter?'

'Yes,' Mrs. Sutton answered; and the large blue eyes that she had kept half closed all day opened suddenly, and a light darted out from them—the cold, clear, pitiless light of hatred. 'Yes; Blanche is Mrs. Lyon's daughter, and a precious pair they are. Edgar will rue the day he brought them into his house; but he would never forgive me for saying it to you, so you must keep that secret also for me, Trixy; and now we will speak of pleasanter things. You all (Lionel too) are to dine with us to-morrow night. Is not Lionel charming?'

'He is indeed,' Trixy answered, with a certain feeling of Lionel being the only sure footing she had in the family. 'I long to see his paintings.'

Mrs. Sutton laughed. 'I long to see one, and that is a portrait of myself that I want him to paint for the Academy this year; but he is only my brother, and does not seem

anxious to undertake a task that other men have begged for as a boon.'

'Why did you refuse, if any one of them could have done it well?' Trixy asked. There was something, it was hard to determine whether it was sublime or ridiculous, in the intense air of vanity with which Mrs. Sutton had made the assertion about the begging and the boon.

'Why did I refuse? Because I am obliged to be so careful, Trixy. I often wish I had been born old, and ugly, and unattractive, and then, perhaps, I might have known a little peace.' Then the carriage stopped in Victoria Street, and after depositing Miss Talbot, the victim to her own youth, beauty, and attractions, rolled softly away home, where we shall follow her.

CHAPTER III.

FALSE DIPLOMACY.

The house to which Mrs. Sutton was driven after leaving her sister, was a handsome, tall, heavily-ported house, out at South Kensington, just opposite to the barren wilderness where the Exhibition of 1862 stood. The size and situation of the house spoke of wealth—so did the carriage and dress of its mistress and the number and orderliness of her servants—so did the interior arrangements and furniture. They all spoke of wealth—but of wealth not long possessed—of wealth that had not come by inheritance: everything was terribly fresh—there was the glitter of recently-made gold about it all.

It was nearly six o'clock when Mrs. Sutton walked into her house, and after looking at the cards and letters on the hall table, and selecting three or four of the latter for private perusal, asked if the master was come home yet? On being told yes, she went on to a room behind the hall, and into the presence of her husband.

He was lying back in a large arm-chair before the fire when she entered, but he got up at her approach, and pushed it back a little, for her to take a lower and more

comfortable one by his side. Standing up and smiling a welcome to a woman whom he worshipped, Mr. Sutton was seen at his best. What that best was shall be told briefly.

He was a short, thick-set man, with a large fat florid face, surmounted by a quantity of smoothly-brushed straight yellow-brown hair. His forehead was broad and strong over the brows, and his eyes were of a cool, steady grey, that would have betokened something like fixedness of purpose and strength of will had they not been contradicted by the loose expression of a large unwieldy mouth. He had been many things before he became a successful speculator. But under every phase he himself truthfully averred that he had never been mean or dishonourable; and Marian added that he never had been and never would be a gentleman.

Indeed, at the first glance, all the conditions which must be fulfilled before a man has a right to that proudest word of all, 'gentleman,' stamped upon him, were wanting in Mark Sutton. The son of a small country-town tradesman, without a classical education, the trick of manner, or the gracious gift of a good appearance, he belonged clearly and unalterably to the people. Yet for all that he had worked his way up steadily to dine with princes (only at civic feasts, certainly), and to be the husband of a beautiful, refined, well-bred woman, who never suffered him to forget that she was a Talbot.

'Well, my Marian!' he said, taking her hand kindly as she seated herself. 'You have been to your sister; what do you think of the stranger?'

It was a habit of his to put what he knew to be the case in the form of an assertion to his wife when questioning her about her daily path. If he seemed to be sure of a thing Marian was under less temptation to tell a story about it. Under 'less temptation,' but still not entirely free from it. For the fascination of falsehood was strongly upon Mrs. Sutton, and she rarely told the truth—never when she could avoid doing so.

'Yes; I have been with her at

Edgar's all the time, Mark,' she answered, brightly. 'She is very pretty now. When I have polished her up a little she will be very perfect. I gave up my whole afternoon to her, instead of going to Hortense, as I intended.'

Mr. Sutton checked the exclamation of 'What was your carriage doing at Hortense's door, then, when I saw it?' Marian would not have been much discomfited by his saying it, but he would have been pained to discomfit her ever so little. Her mendacity was a disease in his eyes, to be treated tenderly.

'I have seen Edgar this afternoon; he seems to have made very considerate plans for his sister's comfort.'

Mrs. Sutton shrugged her shoulders.

'He will be sure to make a great parade about all he does; and he will be equally sure not to make a single plan that does not materially conduce to his own comfort. It is a most painful thing to have to say of one's brother, but I must say it—Edgar is selfish to his heart's core.'

Mr. Sutton having heard the same remark made before, paid little attention to it. Now Edgar Talbot had made the mistake, not of finding Marian out more frequently than any one else, but of letting her feel that he had done so.

'He tells me that she will go into society under Mrs. Lyon's auspices.'

'Yes; and she is a regular old soldier. Trixy will go into society under Mrs. Lyon's auspices, in order that Edgar may have a decent excuse for making a fool of himself under the auspices of Miss Lyon. His consideration for his sister does not carry him far enough to provide her with pocket-money. Fortunately, this afternoon, I was able to tell her my purse was at her disposal; which obliges me,' she added, rapidly, leaning caressingly over Mark Sutton's stout arm, 'to come to you to replenish it—will you?'

She spoke in a little coaxing, winning way, that, strangely enough, sounded very sweet in the ears of the man she addressed. The con-

viction that there was a false ring in that silver bell-like voice scarcely tainted the pleasure he felt in her deeming it worth while to use dulcet tones to him.

'"Will I?" Wouldn't I give my heart's blood for you?' he said, rising up, unlocking a drawer in his writing-table, and taking out a cheque-book. 'How much do you want, Marian—a hundred?'

Now, a hundred pounds was but as a drop in the ocean of Mrs. Sutton's debts; but it would quiet Hortense, and Hortense was the one whose claim had been brought forward most urgently of late. So now she checked the sneer, that was almost on her lips, at what she considered the meanness of the low-born man whose duty and privilege it was to pay for the faults and follies of his well-born wife—checked the sneer, and developed a smile of gratitude.

'A hundred will be magnificent! I shall be able to make up Edgar's shortcomings to Trixy now, thanks to your generosity.'

Then she took the cheque, and folded it away leisurely in her portemonnaie, and he watched each graceful, languid, indifferent gesture, with a proud delight in the woman who used them being his own.

She went away to dress for dinner soon after that, and presently came down and placed herself opposite to him at the table, set off in a way that struck even him—little as the traditions of his youth had taught him of any form of beauty. She wore the last birthday present he had made her—a black velvet dress cut square, with sleeves that just reached the elbow, and with both neck and sleeves richly trimmed with Mechlin lace. There was lace fastened with a diamond pin on her soft brown hair, too, and her fingers glittered with jewels.

'Why, Marian! how splendid you are,' he exclaimed.

She laughed, and said, 'Yes—he knew he was going out to meet a man on business at his club, directly after dinner, so she had made herself look as well as she could while he was with her.'

He looked so fondly at her by way

of reply, and still his face fell, for he knew she was not giving him real reasons for the richness with which she had arrayed herself. There was something behind that fair seeming of conjugal consideration. What was it? and how could he avert any ill consequences that might ensue from it to her?

'You expect friends this evening, perhaps, dear?' He always gave her a chance of saving herself, and standing well before herself and the world and him—this man, who had sprung from the mud, and who had, as she was wont to declare, 'none of the instincts of a gentleman.' He always gave her a chance—it was the grief of his life that she so seldom availed herself of it.

She lifted her fair face innocently towards him.

'No, I do not, Mark,' she said. 'I shall read while you're away; and you will not be late, will you?'

'I am not going at all to-night,' he answered, averting his eyes from hers, in order that she might not see that he read the chagrin she could not conceal—skilful adept in deceit as she was. Then Mrs. Sutton lowered her spirits suddenly, and the dinner came to a conclusion amidst thickest gloom.

It was not late—only about half-past nine o'clock—when the lady was roused from the corner of the little couch on which she had settled herself, by the announcement of 'Mr. Lionel Talbot and Mr. Bathurst,' and she was just gracefully welcoming the latter, when Lionel's exclamation of, 'Ah! Sutton, I'm very glad to find you at home; Marian told me you were out to-night,' betrayed to Marian that she was found out again in a superfluous story.

'But I was persuaded to stay and see you,' Mr. Sutton replied, calmly; and then, glad to find that it was no worse, that one of the guests for whom she had elaborately prepared herself was her own brother and his great favourite, Lionel Talbot, Mr. Sutton resigned himself to the ungenial office of making his house agreeable to Mr. Bathurst, a man with whom he had not an idea in common.

Frank Bathurst was the last person in the world who would have been selected, by people who are fond of pairing others according to their own tastes, as the friend of Lionel Talbot. It is true that they both loved the same things, but they loved in such a widely-different way, that the manner of their worship ought to have sundered their souls more effectually than if each had bent before another shrine, and was a bigot about every other form of faith. Frank Bathurst had been left lord of himself and ten thousand a year when he was only nineteen, and, in defiance of the bard's decision to the contrary, he had not found it a heritage of woe. He was a painter and a musician, and he spread out the power his money gave him in all directions, like a polypus, in order to find the means to further the aim he had, namely, to attain perfection and gain a name in both these arts. He had birth and place; he was known as a man of fashion and cultivation—his good looks were a sure passport to the favour of every man and woman on whom he turned his handsome face; and it was not enough for him. He sighed to write some notes that should thrill some world where Verdi was not cherished—to paint a picture that should tell some noble story: nobly to do something good, and grand, and, above all, true.

Above all, true! In his doubt of this aspiration being the most sincere one of his heart was to be found the sole alloy to Frank Bathurst's happiness in life and faith in himself. Ardently as he was set upon achieving something lofty, he was equally ardent in the intensity of his desire that success should wait upon his worthy merits. To do good unseen was quite enough in art for Lionel Talbot, to whom public applause meant only what it was worth; but it was not enough for the brilliant young man already so favoured by fortune and nature. He wanted not only to deserve, but to command, the verbal laurels which are hung over every acknowledged victor's brow. He was earnest and unceasing in his efforts to attain

what he desired—unresting in pursuit of every ennobling influence—unhasting and careful in the way in which he brought those influences to bear upon his ends. So far as the manner of his means went he was a true artist; but in the motive there was the germ of a flaw. He was over-ambitious: worse still, he was desirous that the realization of his ambition should become a well-known fact.

The two men had cast in their lots together for awhile, and were working in a studio in Frank Bathurst's house, in the bright Bayswater air; working unremittingly each after his kind, Bathurst at a great picture that absorbed him—'The Battle of the Bards'—a picture into which he had 'thrown all his strength' he firmly believed, and which he loved and looked forward to as to a thing that should make him of great account honestly in the realms of art; and Lionel Talbot at a small piece of canvas—small, at least, in comparison with that which Frank was covering with frightened beauties and frantic bards—on which was represented waves in half a gale of wind, with the moonlight on them. He had learnt to know and love his model well down on the wild Cornish coast—the beauty of it had gone into his soul. So he painted it, without giving a thought to the contemptuous overlooking it would be sure to receive at the eyes of the eager votaries of art on the first of May.

It was the first time Mrs. Sutton had seen the man whom she emphatically declared to be Lionel's only respectable friend. She had persuaded her brother to bring Mr. Bathurst, under a promise of showing him a certain quaint old line engraving of some scene of courtly confusion, which seemed to have much in common with the one Mr. Bathurst was striving to depict from 'Tannhäuser.'

'From what you tell me of the grouping, Lionel, it must be very similar to an engraving I have,' she had said the day before, after listening—without attending—to what Lionel had said relative to the composition of his friend's picture. 'I shall be happy to show it to Mr. Bathurst, if you will bring him to see it.'

'I could take it to him to-day,' Lionel had suggested.

'That, unfortunately, I cannot allow you to do: it is in a portfolio that Mr. Sutton prizes highly. No; Mr. Bathurst must come here if you want him to see it.'

Then she had invited him for the following evening, appending to the invitation her regret that Mr. Sutton would be unavoidably absent. And so they had come, as has been seen, and the engraving proved, on inspection, to be a snare and a delusion, as far as the faintest possible resemblance between it and the grouping of Mr. Bathurst's picture was concerned. But, as she said, her 'stupid mistake promised to be the basis of an agreeable acquaintance,' for Mr. Bathurst pledged himself to make one of the family party which was to dine at Mr. Sutton's the following day. 'Only a quiet little dinner, given in honour of the return among us of my sister, Miss Talbot,' she explained. And even while she was saying it she made up her mind that she would not do as she had intended doing before she knew that Mr. Bathurst would be with them—go round to Victoria Street in the morning, and suggest a charming toilette for Trixy, in order that Trixy might tell Edgar how considerate Marian was, and possibly induce Edgar to feel that he had been unwise in not trusting Miss Talbot's future in her married sister's hands.

But it is time that Miss Lyon should come forward.







"Sure to be *somebody* nice, Charlie thinks, or it would not be worth a seven miles drive in the wet."



"His expectations are scarcely realized."

SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

THE 'BEAUX MONDES' OF PARIS AND LONDON.

IT is now some months since one of the leading and most popular journals of the day directed the public attention to a very remarkable phase of society in Paris. It seems that a certain portion of the *beau monde* of that capital, impelled by an incredible impulse (whether for good or evil who can tell?), made advances to the *demi monde*, and both sought and obtained admission within the precincts of that society. It almost surpasses belief, that women of fair reputation, of good descent, and of high repute in the best Parisian society should, for the sake of an idle curiosity, condescend to desire an acquaintance with the life, manners, and customs, of a certain class of women whose position and circumstances denote the very reverse of purity and chastity, and who keep a kind of court which is attended by all the men of wealth and fashion between twenty and sixty. It is possible that the *beau monde* may have desired to solve the problem why there existed so great a disinclination for matrimony, and what those charms were which attracted so many from their homes and made them truants. They may have wished to reclaim some who had wandered from their allegiance, but it was a rash experiment and one which nothing could justify. Their presence sanctioned that against which their whole life was, or ought to have been, a protest. They descended from their high position, and if they have sullied their own reputation they have no one to blame but themselves. If mere idle curiosity was their motive they were, of course, still more without excuse. We all know how fatal a gift curiosity is, and how much woe it has worked. Our common mother Eve was not proof against it, and we are sufferers. How could they hope to escape its penalties if they were bent upon indulging it at all risks? But there is a much graver question underlying this peculiar phase of Parisian society. Is it that in France there is a dif-

ferent code of morals to that which prevails wherever Christianity is taught? Is it that French morality and French decency are names without a meaning, and that Paris is more honeycombed with vice than any other city? Is it that the Court is less pure or the general tone of society more corrupt? Is it that home influences are unknown or depreciated? It is a remarkable fact, when taken in combination with the flourishing condition of the *demi monde* and the recognized 'status' it has in Paris, that a French family is proverbially small; so much so that the contrary is looked upon as quite exceptional, which a French lady of our acquaintance spoke of as being *comme les Anglais*.

It was not long after our attention had been drawn to the existing state of things, that we read an account of the magnificence of a house in Paris belonging to a lady whose ambition it was to eclipse all her rivals in *luxure*. In addition to the boundless expenditure which she lavished upon it, she ordered, it was said, four pictures of herself to be painted after a peculiar fashion, which shall be nameless. In one of them, which has been completed, she is represented as Cleopatra, as she rises up in her unveiled beauty before the 'dull, cold-blooded Cæsar,' into whose presence she had been introduced within the folds of a carpet. This speaks volumes, and needs no comment. If such *lionnes* are the rage of the fashionable and artistic world of Paris, we cannot be surprised that there should be any approximation to an *entente cordiale* between the *beau monde* and the *demi monde*. We remember to have heard some years ago an Englishman, who had married a foreigner, declare that he would never allow his wife to have a French woman for her friend, as he believed there was scarcely one good one amongst them. This was a sweeping condemnation against which we were not slow to protest, because we have ourselves known several who are

examples of all that is good and pure. But after the revelations that have lately been made, we are inclined to fear that general society is not conspicuous for its morality.

Paris has reached a climax in what is generally called civilization that cannot be surpassed. She has adorned and beautified herself with a rapidity and splendour that are without a parallel. She is the most beautiful capital in the world—the queen of cities; she has put out of sight all that can offend the taste of the most refined critics; she has driven further and further back all the signs of poverty and labour which might offend the eye or suggest a thought inconsistent with the opulence and gaiety with which it is her desire to impress her visitors; she is a very Sybarite of cities; but with all her magnificence of decoration, with all her lavish outlay and ever-changing caprice, which constitutes her the leader of fashion throughout Europe, she carries within herself the elements of her own ruin, which cannot be far distant. No society can last long which is so rotten at its core, where profligacy reigns, and all sense of propriety is at a discount.

The history of the world supplies abundant instances of cities which have reached a climax of refined splendour, and, being lifted up in their pride, have overlooked virtue, and have been dashed to the ground, and have crumbled to ruin; nor need France go far to look for such an example. In the period before the great French Revolution society had become corrupt. They who ought to have been examples of virtue made use of their high and exalted position for the indulgence of their evil passions, and saw in it only opportunities for a vicious life. Even now men tremble at the recollection of the awful judgment that fell upon them, which has left that fair and beautiful country in a state of ferment from which there seems to be no repose, and which can only be kept under by the firm hand of a great military power which is ever ready to repress the first indication of the popular mind daring to think for itself.

We have said that there is a deeper and graver question underlying the present aspect of society in Paris. May it not be that there is throughout society, in every part of the world, a general uprising against restrictions of all kinds? Freedom and liberty are the watchwords of all parties and all nations, and the separation between them and licentiousness and license is very narrow and quickly got over. Under their high-sounding names much wrong is done; spoliation and lawlessness shelter themselves there, and every one claims for himself the right to do what seems to him good in his own eyes. It is impossible to help seeing that there is a growing dislike to all authority, to everything which imposes a fetter upon the human will. Children are quick to throw off the restraints of parental authority; married people to live more separate lives; scholars to sit in judgment on their teachers; congregations to dismiss their preachers; the clergy to set at nought their bishops; politicians to foment discord and rebellion when it suits their purpose to do so. The disposition to reduce the law of both church and state down to the very minimum of its letter is one of the prevailing faults of the age. The first promptings of the human intellect of the present day is to dispute, step by step, every demand which is made upon it in the name of authority; and we believe it to be this temper which tends to the severance of those ties, and the depreciation of those maxims which are the bond and safeguard of society.

There are certain usages and customs better known by the somewhat indefinite term of the *convenances* of society, which have become to some extent law, and have a prescriptive right to our respectful attention and consideration. Against these the mind of the nineteenth century rebels. Old customs and traditions are treated with the utmost contempt and set at nought, and in the manners of the rising generation there is expressed the most decided resistance to that delicacy of thought and consideration for others which

formerly served to make men keep out of sight any infringement against good morals. It may be said that the motive was low—that it was a mere feeling of human respect, and, as such, of but little value; yet, even if so, it surely had the advantage over that most culpable disregard for appearances which leads to the public exhibition of vice. In the fact that men dare not associate publicly with vicious companions there lies a protest on the part of society in general against their evil doings; but the moment they cease to restrain their conduct within due limits, and unblushingly pursue their course, and society still tolerates them and winks at their effrontery, there is no longer any safeguard against its utter demoralization.

We owe a vast debt to those who have raised their voices in condemnation of the attitude of the *beau monde* towards the *demi monde* of Paris. We do not entertain the opinion held by some that it is better not to speak of these things, but simply to ignore them as if they did not exist; for if we have a serious malady, or a wound in any part of our bodies, we do not gain anything by pretending that we have it not; and we hold that it is, to say the least, unwise to shut our eyes to the fact that a revolution of an important character has taken place in society.

In public matters there is nothing wrong in pointing out a scandal where it exists. To ferret out a neighbour's faults, and to expose them to the public gaze, is an infringement of the law of charity. But that which is a blot in the intercourse of individuals with each other, chameleon-like, changes its hue altogether when it becomes a question of nation against nation. National customs, national tastes, national faults, are a safe mark for other nations to hit at pleasure. In the first place, what is national is more or less public property—there is no exposure of 'secret faults'; and, in the second place, the principle of self-protection justifies it, because we may avert evil from ourselves by noting its existence and its ruinous consequences elsewhere. We

may effect a kind of moral quarantine by which dangerous and polluting influences shall be kept at a distance. It becomes a duty to note and comment upon the signs of the times, and to take warning from every false step which others make. We may thereby arrest the progress of evil at home, and expose the snares and pitfalls which lie concealed beneath a specious exterior; only let us be sure of one thing—that we are equally clear-sighted as to our own defects.

'O wad some Power the gifle gie us
To see oursels as others see us,
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
And foolish notion.'

There is no fault into which we are more apt to fall than that of being keen to detect errors and shortcomings in others, and slow in discovering our own. As individuals we have no right to do so. But the law which is intended to seal the lips of those who are addicted to evil speaking has no such restrictive power where nations and the public good are concerned. It is said that, as a rule, no class of persons is so censorious as the highly moral. There is something, perhaps, in the unassailability of virtue and morality which tempts the virtuous to throw stones; and we are disposed to think that it is the tendency of all nations, but especially of Englishmen, to hold the customs, traditions, and manners of all other countries cheap.

It is a matter of fact that, with all our national pride, we are, in many instances, the most servile copyists of the French, and it will be well for us to inquire whether the spirit of this century has not led us in the same direction as that which we so justly condemn in our neighbours. Are there any indications of a similar movement on this side of the Channel? Can we detect any signs and sounds of its advent among us? There is no wisdom in throwing dust in our own eyes; to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and we are inclined to think that there are sufficient grounds for apprehension.

Not many years ago it would

have been considered to be the very acme of indecency and impudence for any of the thoughtless young men who abound, more or less, in every capital to recognize, or to appear even to notice in public, any of those fair 'unfortunates' who lie in wait 'to hunt souls.' They would have been distressed beyond measure at the idea that their mothers or sisters should suspect, much more know, of their having formed any *liaison* so dangerous and disreputable. But such tenderness of conscience, such regard for the proprieties of life, scarcely remains. It is no uncommon thing for a young man to appear in the Park escorting a 'celebrity' of this kind, and, as he passes some lady of his acquaintance, to lift his hat in courteous recognition of her, as though there were nothing to be ashamed of in his companion. Nor is it rare for a popular character to appear at the Opera, exquisitely dressed, and with some pretence of modesty in her attire, in one of the most conspicuous boxes, surrounded by her admirers, whose relations witness their infatuation from the opposite tier. Nor is this all. The very names of these women have become so notorious that they are in the mouths of many of the fast young ladies of our *beau monde*. How they have come to such a knowledge let others tell; but they speak of them, of their 'turn out,' and their horsemanship, and note their dress and style, and can tell the 'Skittles' ponies at a distance, and the precise hour at which she drives into the Park; how she wears her hat, the colour of her horse and habit, and even go so far as to dress after her, taking their cue from her as if they envied her her power of attraction. It is notorious that many of the changes which we have witnessed of late years in hats and petticoats have originated from celebrities of this kind, and we fear it is an indication of a disposition on the part of our

beau monde to take a leaf out of the book of the *beau monde* of Paris. There was also a symptom of a like tendency in the strange freak which so engrossed all our fine ladies a few years ago when nothing would satisfy them but 'a night at Cremorne.' They were possessed by a strange and most ill-advised curiosity to know something of its attractions, and to acquaint themselves with one of the popular haunts of the *demi monde*. It is true that our noble countrywomen shut out for the time its usual patronesses, and monopolized it to themselves, and that in this respect they did not go so deep into the mire as our foreign neighbours would have done, who would have preferred it un-Romfordized; but in other respects it exhibits the same tendency to overstep the barrier between them and their frail sisterhood, which we would earnestly implore them never to lower for any consideration. We think that, taking all things into account, the disposition which exists to trample out of sight all the finer lines which until lately regulated the social intercourse of the upper classes, and the very great license which is given to the tongue, by which the fine edge of modesty is blunted, we shall do well to look at home before we are so loud in our condemnation of others. Burns's lines to the 'unco' guid' are never out of season—

'A' ye wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy;
Ye've naecht to do but mark and tell
Your neebours' faults and folly.'

If we have as yet escaped the contamination which must, we fear, precede such an act as that by which the *beau monde* of Paris degraded itself, it is still an undoubted fact that we are not standing on such a pinnacle of superior sanctity and morality that we can reasonably congratulate ourselves that we are 'not as other men.'



A SHOT AT TWELVE PACES



PRUSSIAN officer killed in a duel, I see,' said Galton, laying down the 'Times.'

'Every man who fights a duel is a fool, who's better out of the world than in it,' said Dormer, laying down the law.

'And the seconds are worse than the principals; they share the folly and not the danger,' said Bingham, taking up the strain.

'Gently, gently! Sweeping censure is always unjust,' said Morley, taking up the speaker.

'Heyday, Morley! You are not a duelling man, are you? You never left the Rue de la Paix to walk in the Champ de Mars, surely!'

'Well, I was very nearly a second once.'

'Very nearly! Didn't the fight come off?'

'No.'

'How was it? A very decided challenge, I suppose, and then the principals fought—shy, eh?'

'No, no; the principals were in serious earnest about it, I assure you.'

'Then the authorities interfered and stopped the fun, perhaps?'

'Wrong again. Not a soul threw the least obstacle in the way of the meeting.'

'Well, how was it, then?'

'Why, the fact was, that when we got to the ground—but perhaps I'd better tell you the whole story.'

'By all means,' said Galton. 'Silence, gentlemen. Silence, there. Monsieur raconte.' And accordingly Monsieur recounted the following.

'When I was shooting in India, I one morning received a letter, expressed in some such terms as these:—

"DEAR MORLEY,—I have a little shooting party on, and want your assistance. Come as soon as possible to Harrison's bungalow; we will make all arrangements there, and you can go and call on O'Flaherty at once. We are going to have a shot at large game for a change. Don't delay a moment. In these cases the scent should be followed while it's warm. The fellow's a big brute, and shall not escape me, if I know it. He's caught a Tartar this time. We'll put an ounce of lead into his carcase before he's twenty-four hours older, or I'm not yours, ever,

"DENNIS O'DOWD."

'A tiger, by Jove! I thought. A tiger at last.

'I had been waiting for weeks in the hope of getting a shot at a tiger, and had been repeatedly tantalized with reports of one being somewhere in the neighbourhood. The jungle came down to within a very short distance of the place where I was staying, and the country looked the

very ideal of what a tiger country should be; but I had never had the luck to get a shot at one yet, although for some time past there had been rumours that a tiger was about. He had been seen here, and heard of there; he had carried off a sheep in one place, and a bullock in another; but still no one had been able to find out anything as to his actual whereabouts sufficiently definite to make it of any use our going after him. But now, thought I, O'Dowd must have got the bearings of the beast pretty accurately. I could have wished that Dennis had been a little less flowery and "tropical" in his account, but he always was a funny dog; the drift of his letter was clear enough; and if the tiger's having caught a Tartar was not a mere figure of speech, the animal must be a very fine one. The part about O'Flaherty puzzled me a little; it had always struck me that he and O'Dowd were by no means warm friends; O'Flaherty was always chaffing O'Dowd, and O'Dowd always vowing vengeance against O'Flaherty. But it was all fun, perhaps; and O'Flaherty was a great hand at tiger shooting, I dared to say. At any rate, hurrah for the tiger! And I hurried off to Harrison's bungalow, where I found O'Dowd, with an expression of the utmost determination upon his face, drinking pale ale as if he meant it.

"Well, O'Dowd," said I; "we're to have a shot at him at last, are we?"

"That we are," said he; "or I'll post him."

'Post him! Post a tiger! O'Dowd was still at his jokes.

"Well! And when is it to be?" I asked.

"I won't have it delayed longer than to-morrow morning," answered Dennis. "You must go to O'Flaherty at once, and if he prefers this evening—faith! all the better."

"Oh! it depends upon him, does it?" said I.

"Well, of course it does," said O'Dowd, "to a certain extent; but not later than to-morrow morning, mind. And now I'll tell you all about it."

"Ay, let's hear all about the

gentleman," said I, eagerly. "He's been playing with us long enough. We'll put a bullet into his hide now."

"That we will, my boy," returned O'Dowd. "Now just listen to me. As I was walking up here last night, I met him sauntering——"

"What! You met the beast, you say?"

"And you may call him a beast," said O'Dowd. "He was that for certain. He'd had too much; I'll take my oath of that."

"Glutted with carnage," I muttered.

"I could see it, at once," continued O'Dowd; "I took his measure at a glance."

"Well," said I, anxious to know his size, "and——"

"And I could see that he'd had a deal more than a taste of the cratur, though he carried it off in such a mighty easy way."

"Carried it off easily, did he?" said I: a sheep or a bullock, of course. "What! he was off with it to his den, no doubt?"

"No doubt," said O'Dowd; "he generally finishes his evening in his own den, the insatiable thief. Well, when he saw me, he came towards me, roaring——"

"Roaring! Came towards you!" I exclaimed. "By Jove! you took it very coolly. Didn't you run?"

"Run!" said O'Dowd, as if uncertain whether to be offended or not; "will you please to be serious, Morley. This is no joke I'm telling you."

"No joke! My dear O'Dowd, I should think not, indeed. What did you do?"

"When he saw me, I tell you, he pulls his cigar out of his mouth——"

"Eh! What? Cigar!"

"And comes towards me, roaring out, 'What are doing out o' bed, O'Dowd? Go home with you. You've got chewbercles in your lungs. Go home!'"

"The tiger said," I gasped out.

"Tiger! What are you after, Morley?"

"Who said you'd got tubercle?"

"Who? Why, O'Flaherty."

"Oh, confound O'Flaherty!" I said. "Why the plague are you

always bringing his name in? Tell me about the tiger."

"What tiger?" said O'Dowd. "In the name of mystery, what tiger?"

"Why, the tiger we're going to shoot, of course."

"I'm going to shoot no tiger. I'm going to shoot O'Flaherty."

"Shoot O'Flaherty! What are you going to shoot him for?"

"Why, didn't you understand? He told me I'd got chewbercles."

"And so this precious note of yours," said I, producing the epistle, "was to tell me that you're going to fight O'Flaherty?"

"Faith! and you may say that," replied O'Dowd. "I thought I'd put it delicately."

"By Jove! you put it so delicately that I thought it all referred to tiger shooting."

"And did you so?" said Dennis, with some pride. "Begad! I always was a neat hand at letter-writing."

"But you're not serious, I hope, O'Dowd," I said. "You don't really mean that you intend to shoot O'Flaherty?"

"I'll be shot if I don't," returned O'Dowd, very decidedly. "He told me I'd got chewbercles in my lungs."

"And there was very little doubt that O'Flaherty was right. A few years afterwards the fact became fatally evident. Death, and a P. M. examination, put it beyond all question. But even if there had been no grounds for it, the idea of shooting a man for such a reason as this was absurd."

"My dear fellow," said I to O'Dowd, "this must not be allowed to go on. I can't consent to act as your friend in such a case as this. It would be a different matter if he'd given you the lie, or—"

"Given me the lie!" said O'Dowd. "Didn't he tell me I'd got chewbercles, when I haven't anything of the kind. Isn't that giving me the lie, to all intents and purposes; giving me the lie in the throat as deep as to the lungs, as Shakespeare says, eh? Once for all, will you undertake the matter?"

"I'd rather be excused," I said.

"Very good," said O'Dowd; "then I wish you good morning. I'll go and call on O'Grady."

O'Grady! The most determined fire-eater in the empire. If he called on O'Grady it would end in a fight as certainly as doomsday. If I undertook it, we might perhaps come to some arrangement; so, with much reluctance, I told Dennis that he might command me.

"I knew you'd never spoil sport," said O'Dowd. "Now, look here, Morley, you go at once to O'Flaherty, and give him to understand that I require—"

"For heaven's sake, my dear O'Dowd," said I, anxiously, "don't be too hard upon him. Put it as peaceably as you can."

"Just what I'm going to do," said O'Dowd. "You go to O'Flaherty, and tell him that I require a written apology, which must contain a confession that he was drunk at the time of speaking, and a declaration of his full belief that I've no more got chewbercles than he has. If he declines to give this, I expect immediate satisfaction. I can't put it more peaceably than that, now, can I?"

"I certainly thought it possible, but as O'Dowd adhered to his own opinion, that did no good at all. So, armed with this peaceable message, I took my way to O'Flaherty, whom I found sitting lazily upon a cane-bottomed chair, and surrounded by soda-water bottles."

"Ha! Morley," said he, "delighted to see you, upon me conscience. Will you take a peg?" No! You'd better. I've done little else ever since I got up. Well! yes, I was a little sprung last night; just a drappie in me ee, as that Scotch fellow says in his infernal brogue. Begad! looking back upon last night's proceedings, reminds me of those dissolving views, where each picture gets misty, and runs into the next."

"I suppose, then, you have no

* As it may not be among the things generally known, I ought perhaps to explain that in India the word 'Peg' means so in water and brandy. The full phrase is 'another peg in your coffin,' alluding to the deleterious effects of the drink.

very distinct recollection of the people you met last night, have you?" I inquired.

"Faith! no," said he; "my memory might be clearer."

"Well, the fact is, I'm come upon a very unpleasant mission. You don't remember meeting O'Dowd, do you?"

"It's O'Dowd you mean!" said O'Flaherty, thoughtfully. "Begad, then, I don't."

"Ah! You did meet him, though, and he says insulted him greatly."

"And did I insult him?" said O'Flaherty, taking up a soda-water bottle. "That's mighty curious. How did I do it?"

"Well, it seems you said something about his having tubercle of the lung, and he does not like it. He's rather touchy about his chest, you know."

"Ay, I know. And did I tell him that?"

"Yes, you told him that he'd got tubercle; and he took the speech so much to heart, that I am come from him to say that he expects an apology."

"Begad, and were you told to say that?"

"I was, indeed; and I'm sure, my dear fellow, you must see how extravagantly absurd we shall all make ourselves if this affair proceeds any further. Every mess-room in India will be laughing at the Tubercle duel. I am sure you must perceive the truth of this, and the absolute necessity of putting a stop to it at once. By Jove, sir, we shall never hear the last of it till the day of our death."

"You may say that, indeed," said O'Flaherty, laughing. "Faith, it won't be only O'Dowd who'll be troubled with chewbercles, will it?"

"No, that it won't. It's not generally considered an infectious disorder, but it will infect us, at any rate," said I.

"Change of air will be the only thing for us," said O'Flaherty.

"Then, look here, my dear O'Flaherty," said I, pushing a writing-case towards him; "just scratch two or three lines to say that last night you were, as you've just said,

troubled with a drappie in your ee; and you may add—it's as well to do the thing handsomely while you are about it—that you have perfect faith, ha! ha!—perfect faith in the integrity of O'Dowd's lungs. Come, what do you say?"

"Pop went the soda-water."

"That," said O'Flaherty.

"That! Explain, please."

"That's all the apology that ye'll get from me."

"But, my good sir, if you don't ap—explain in some way, O'Dowd insists upon fighting."

"And by the blessed St. Patrick," said O'Flaherty, his speech becoming ten times more Irish than before at the mention of the national pastime;—"and by the blessed Saint Patrick, I'll humour his fancy. If it's foighting he manes, I'll foight him with all me sowl—with all the pleasure in life, begad. Ye can't fright Tim O'Flaherty into an apology by telling him that foighting's the alternative, I promise ye."

"Fright you," said I; "I never dreamed of frightening you. But reflect for a moment upon the absurdity of the whole affair. Come, old fellow, stretch a point, and save us from universal ridicule."

"Faith, not I," said O'Flaherty; "the prospect don't trouble me at all to speak of."

"Then you decline to apologize altogether?"

"There, if you haven't stated the case exactly."

"Then I've no resource but to ask you for the name of your friend, if you really will not be persuaded to—"

"I can't really undertake to be persuaded, me dear friend. Are you going? Well, good-bye; I'll send some one to call upon you in a twinkling."

"Disgusted exceedingly, I took my leave and returned to my quarters. The idea of two fellows shooting at each other for no better reason than that one had accused the other of having diseased lungs, was so confoundedly ridiculous, that, setting aside the unpleasantness of being engaged in an affair of this kind at all, I would have given anything to be able to wash my hands of it.

But what was to be done? When the two principals—both of them Irishmen, too—were resolved on fighting, what could stop them? Perhaps O'Flaherty's friend, who would, of course, be of my mind about the serious farce in which we were compelled to act, might be able to hit upon some means of getting out of it. I would see what could be done when he arrived. It was really such utter nonsense, that a peg was the only thing to restore a fellow's equanimity after two such interviews.

'Before I had finished the peg, O'Flaherty's friend made his appearance. He was unknown to me. We both bowed.

"Mr. Morley, I believe."

'Upon my life, another Irishman; and my hopes of a peaceable termination to the affair took flight at the very sound of his voice.

"Allow me to introduce myself—Lieutenant Doolan, —th Regiment. I come from Mr. O'Flaherty."

"Oh, yes," said I, affecting to have been momentarily forgetful of that little matter. "Very happy to make your acquaintance, though I could wish it had been under pleasanter conditions."

"Not at all," said Mr. Doolan, in a tone of the most perfect contentment: "not at all. It's not myself that's going to quarrel with the conditions."

'This might be only politeness towards me, but I thought it sounded much more like satisfaction at his mission.

"Mr. O'Flaherty has, no doubt, instructed you fully as to how the matter between himself and Mr. O'Dowd stands."

"Quite so, quite-so," said the lieutenant.

"Then I feel certain, Mr. Doolan, that you must agree with me that this affair cannot be allowed to proceed."

'Doolan simply stared.

"You can scarcely avoid feeling," I continued, "that the cause of quarrel is too slight for us to permit our friends to peril their lives about such a trifle."

"Thrifle!" ejaculated Doolan.

"Now, can't we hit upon some

method for bringing to a peaceable issue a business which, if proceeded with to the end at present proposed, must, as I'm sure you perceive bring nothing but ridicule upon all engaged in it."

"Faith, then," said Mr. Doolan, warmly, "I perceive nothing of the kind. Hark ye, Mr. Morley; I came here to arrange peaceably the time and place for this meeting, and not to dispute about the rights and wrongs of the matter, or to question the good sense which no doubt injured both the gentlemen to take the fair and honourable course which they have taken. May I beg, sir, that you will enter, as soon as you conveniently can, upon the real business for which I am here."

'There was nothing for it but to pocket the olive, and do as the lieutenant wished. Time and place were agreed upon, and Doolan rose to take his leave. As we were shaking hands in the most friendly manner, I said, "By the way, Mr. Doolan, I must not forget to tell you that I have nothing at all in the shape of a duelling pistol; perhaps you are better provided."

"Make yourself perfectly easy about that, Mr. Morley," said Doolan, who would no more have been without hair triggers than hair brushes; "I never travel without the peacemakers. *Au revoir*." And Mr. Doolan took his departure, after receiving my assurance that I would call upon the surgeon, and make sure of his attendance upon the ground.

'I cheerfully undertook to do this, as I was determined that, at any rate, the surgeon should not be an Irishman, and I had some hopes that he might be able to suggest some way out of the difficulty. Accordingly, after writing a couple of lines to O'Dowd to say that I had arranged everything, and to inform him of the time and place, I set off at once to look up the surgeon. His name was Hale, a thoroughly scientific man, devoted to his profession, and as little likely as anybody to have any sympathy with the romantic folly of the duel found him at home, in remarkably good spirits, as doctors generally are, and engaged upon a paper for

the "Lancet," upon the subject of gunshot wounds.

"How are you, Hale?" said I.

"How do, Morley?" said he. "What's the matter? Anything wrong with you? You look rather out of sorts. Digestion wrong, or what is it?"

"Oh! there's nothing the matter with me," I said; "don't flatter yourself. I want your help, certainly, but not for myself. You'll be wanted about half-past five this afternoon at——"

"Eh!" said Hale. "You don't mean to say that Mrs.——"

"No, no," said I, "nothing of the kind—quite the reverse, indeed. No, the state of the case is this:—O'Dowd has taken umbrage at something O'Flaherty has said, and has insisted upon calling him out."

"Ah, that's it, is it," said Hale, his eyes brightening; "and you'll want me upon the ground in case of accident. Certainly, with all my heart. Pistols, of course"—with a glance at his manuscript—"nothing like pistols. You may depend upon me, Morley. You may be quite certain that I shall be there."

"The villain was evidently in want of an illustration to prove some confounded theory of his own with regard to bullet wounds. His glance at the manuscript betrayed him."

"No, but look here, Hale," I said, "the affair ought not to be allowed to go on."

"You think not," said he, as if entertaining the very gravest doubts as to the wisdom of my opinion.

"Certainly I think not; and you'll think so, too, when you hear the case. Last night O'Flaherty, when slightly screwed, charged O'Dowd with having tubercle of the lung."

"And a most insolent thing to say, too, though it's a positive fact all the same. *In vino veritas*, and no mistake. But still a man with any respect for himself, can't allow his lungs to be thrown in his face in that way without taking notice of it. And so O'Dowd demands an apology or a meeting, eh?"

"Just so. He insists upon an apology, and—it's really too absurd—a declaration from O'Flaherty that

the charge brought against his lungs was unfounded."

"Quite correct," said Hale, "and this declaration O'Flaherty is, of course, unable to make. His statement was a perfectly true one, and he can't unmake it without telling a falsehood. Upon my word, if you can see any way but one out of the difficulty you are cleverer than I."

"I believe you are all gone mad," I said, vexed beyond bearing. "There's not a creature who will look at the thing in a calm and reasonable manner. Why, do you realize, sir, that just for a ridiculous word from a drunken man a valuable life may be lost?"

"Ah, very sad, very sad, indeed," replied the doctor, coolly; "but it can't be helped. The matter is gone too far now to be stopped. A meeting is absolutely necessary for the honour of the parties, and,"—laying his hand casually upon the MS., and speaking in a thoughtful manner—"and may be of infinite service to the cause of——"

"He broke off there, but he meant 'the cause of science,' I'm certain, confound him! He was devoted to his profession was Hale."

"Half-past five, at Harrison's bungalow, if you please, Mr. Hale," said I, coldly, and walked out of the room, the man of science following me to the door, and assuring me, in the cheerfulest and friendliest manner, that I might depend upon him absolutely; that he would sacrifice any number of patients sooner than not be present; and that he would be certain not to forget his instruments.

"I had done my best. I had called upon Common Sense to help me, but Common Sense was nowhere to be found. I had appealed to the Dread of Ridicule, but it slept, and could not be awakened. I had asked Science to lend me a hand, but Science wanted both of hers to seize her own opportunities. There was no resource now but to let the matter go on to its bitter end."

"In affairs of this kind, you know, it is not etiquette for the parties to go in company to the battle ground, as pugilists do to a prize fight. We must go separately to what 'Bell's

Life" would call a likely spot, and meet there with distant politeness. As we had to drive a good way to the place pitched upon by Doolan and myself—an open space, well known to us all, a little way into the jungle—it was agreed that O'Flaherty and his second should go on an hour or two in advance, taking their rifles with them, in order to pass the time with any sport that might fall in their way, and that I, with my principal and the surgeon, should follow at the stated time. All of which happened as arranged. The respondent and Doolan departed early in the afternoon, designing to lunch at the rendezvous; and shortly before six the appellant, Hale, and I followed, drove to the outskirts of the jungle, there left our carriage, and strolled through the trees to the place.

"Here we are," said Hale; "true to our time; but I don't see our friends." Euphemism for enemies.

"They've been here very lately," said O'Dowd, pointing to the relics of a luncheon scattered about on the grass; "and, faith, they've made mighty free with the eatables."

"The end of a feast, most decidedly," said Hale; "so we are quite ready for the beginning of a fray."

"They'll make their appearance in a minute or two, no doubt," I said. "They're having a shot at something in the jungle, perhaps."

"The crack of a rifle a short distance off seemed to confirm my words.

"They might have taken both rifles with them, then, I'm thinking," exclaimed O'Dowd, picking up O'Flaherty's, which lay on the grass.

"We were standing about, O'Dowd examining the rifle, which was loaded, and Hale the pale ale bottles, which were all discharged, when we were surprised by seeing Doolan running towards us with every appearance of extreme terror.

"What's the matter?" we all shouted.

"Here!" he cried. "Come here. Bring the rifle. O'Flaherty's been carried off by a tiger!"

"Now, Morley," said O'Dowd,

"you've got your wish at last. Come along!"

"And we all set off running towards Doolan, who had stopped, and was loading his rifle.

"Did ye hit him, Phil? did ye hit him?" said O'Dowd, when we reached the lieutenant.

"Hit him, is it?" said Doolan.

"No, faith! I daredn't try. I fired, in hopes of frightening him. Come along! He jumped on us from behind, as we were sitting on the bank there, caught poor Tim by the shoulder, and trundled off with him, niver saying a word, as if six feet two were nothing to spake of at all. Come along!" We were hurrying after him all the while. "I jumped up, picked up the rifle: 'Stop, ye thief!' I called out, 'or I'll shoot you!' He gave a wag with his tail, the baste, as much as to say, 'Shoot away; ye daren't hit me for fear of killing Tim; and, begorra, I'll make myself safe enough for the matter of that.' And at the word the cratur chucked poor Tim on to his back, as a fox does with a goose, and away he went again—come along!—safer than ever, for I could see more of O'Flaherty now than I could of him, bad luck to him! and I wished I'd shot at first. I daredn't touch the trigger for the life of me, now, you understand; so I followed till he stopped, after a bit, and lay down with Tim before him, and then I shot, not at him, for fear of killing Tim, but in the hope of frightening the brute. But sorra a bit did it frighten him; it only made him gnash his teeth, and Tim was between 'em, ye'll recollect. So then I ran back for the other rifle, and met you, and—have a care now, we can't be far off him, unless he's eloped with Tim again, which the saints forbid, for it's a mighty unpleasant way of travelling."

"He had not eloped with Tim. He was still lying, where Doolan had left him, with his mouth so close to poor O'Flaherty's ear, that he looked as if he were whispering into it. What was to be done? The very thought of firing into him across O'Flaherty made my hand shake. We all stood still for a mo-

ment or two, staring at the tiger and his victim.

"Now then, who's going to shoot?" said Doolan. "Somebody must, or faith poor Tim will be pinched real before he knows where he is. But I'll be hanged if it's me that's going to do it. You're the best shot, Dennis."

"Shoot, O'Dowd," said I. "I daren't, for the life of me."

"Faith it's a risky shot for certain," said O'Dowd; "but if we stand here and do nothing, there'll be no chance for him at all. Now, hark ye, gentlemen," he said, throwing up his head and looking, tubercle or not, a thoroughly fine fellow, "you all know, I'm sure, that though I was anxious enough to shoot O'Flaherty standing opposite me at twelve paces, I'd be the last man in the world to take advantage of him now. All right—all right. There, that's enough! Upon me sowl, then, I never thought otherwise for a moment. Look here, now. Give Morley your rifle, Phil, and you and Hale stand a trifle back. Now Morley, my boy, I'm going to creep in a thought nearer. Keep you just behind me. I'll blaze away at him first; and I shall hit him, don't be afraid for that. If he springs right at us, cover him well and let fly. If he only jumps up, hand me your rifle, and I'll bang at him again. D'ye understand me?"

"Perfectly."

"Follow me, then."

O'Dowd stepped gently towards the tiger, and I followed his steps closely. When we were within a dozen yards of the animal, the tiger dropped O'Flaherty's arm, which it had in its mouth, and lifted its head. O'Dowd sank on to his knee instantly, looked along his barrel for one second, and fired. With the most awful yell I ever heard the tiger sprang up, gave one bound towards us, and then, before I'd time to mark him properly, rolled over on the long grass.

"Twelve feet from the nose to the tip of the tail, I'll bet a hundred," said O'Dowd, quietly.

I handed him the loaded rifle, and we all, except Doolan, who dashed recklessly over to O'Flaherty,

walked cautiously towards the fallen tiger. The bullet had passed through his eye into his brain, and he was as dead as his greatest grandfather.

"Dead as a herring!" I cried.

"Begad, and so he is," said Doolan, who was bending over O'Flaherty; "and so he is. Come here, Hale, can't you. Bad luck to ye! you're a pretty doctor to stand staring at a tiger when there's a dead Christian in want of your assistance five yards off. Come here, can't you!"

We all ran at once to O'Flaherty.

"Oh, Tim, Tim," whined Doolan, "whatever injured you to go and die in a hurry like this?"

"Die!" said Hale, sharply; "what the dickens are you talking about dying for? The man's not dead. Not a bit of it. His left arm's broken, certainly, broken in two places; and he's nicely contused all over, I'll stake my reputation; pretty well frightened, no doubt; I confess I am, without so much cause; but, dead! Bless my soul, sir, will you have the goodness to allow him a breath of air?"

The breath of air was allowed him. In a very short time he recovered consciousness; requested to know in a strong Irish accent whereabouts he was; betrayed by a few words that he was under the impression that he had lost his way in returning from a heavy dinner, and had gone to sleep by the road side; then recovered his senses completely; listened to the whole history, while Hale tied his arm up as well as it could be done; and finally, with much assistance, rose to his feet.

"Well, gentlemen," said I, cheerfully, "I suppose we may return at once, for the business which we came about will scarcely be proceeded with now, I apprehend."

"I decidedly forbid Mr. O'Flaherty's proceeding with that matter to-day," said Hale, sulkily, laying strong emphasis upon the last word.

"Faith, Hale," said O'Flaherty, "ye may even forbid it altogether. I should be a more insensible brute than that tiger there if I could not

apologize now without feeling any humiliation in doing so. Give us your hand, Dennis, and receive my apologies. I was screwed when I met you the other night, and——"

"You shan't say another word, Tim," said O'Dowd; "if you do, I'll never spake to ye again. Come along; let's go at once. We'll send the servants for the beast yonder."

'We all returned in high spirits; and that was the first and last duel I ever had a hand in.'

'By Jove! that was a fine shot of O'Dowd's,' said Galton, 'and, all the circumstances considered, must have been immensely satisfactory to himself. Yours is the only affair of the

kind, Morley, that I ever heard of, in which either of the principals obtained any real satisfaction.'

'If O'Dowd was as good a hand at a pistol as at a rifle, O'Flaherty's chance would have been a very poor one,' said Dormer.

'Well, the tiger was the real peacemaker after all,' said Bingham, 'and yet he had to suffer for it. There's a want of classical justice about that part of the story.'

'Nay,' said Morley, 'on the contrary, it is quite correct and classical. Amongst the ancients, you know, when two enemies were reconciled, they sacrificed a beast upon the occasion.'



BEFORE THE FOOTLIGHTS;

Or, Sketches of Playhouse Society.

THE HEADS BY CHARLES H. ROSS, THE TALES BY WARNER STIRNCE.

THE PRIVATE BOXES AT DRURY LANE.



THE twenty-sixth of December, and the postman and lamplighter are touching their hats for Christmas-boxes. The turkeys have been carved, the plum-puddings have been eaten, and the mince-pies disposed of. Bills are pouring in upon Paterfamilias, crossing-sweepers, with sprigs of holly in their brooms, are doubly assiduous in wishing pedestrians the compliments of the season; crowds of holiday-makers throng the streets, and block up shop-windows, and Messrs. Tacks, Hammer, and Bradawl are slaving away for the honour of the Theatres Royal to which they are attached, to complete the preparations for the first representation of the 'Grand and original Christmas pantomime of Harlequin King Canute, or, The fourteen Princesses of Pearl-

dom.' The good-natured father taking dress-circle tickets at the box-office thinks nothing of the hurrying to and fro, of the hammering, painting, and polishing going on within the dingy brick walls; the languid gentleman who has agreed to be present in a private box at the first representation of the pantomime, does not trouble his head about the labour and the talent employed in producing the grand scene of the Princess Peewit's Palace of Pearls; and the students of the many-coloured posters stuck upon the hoardings of the metropolis care nothing respecting the means by which the Demon Discord's dismal dungeon is to be transformed into the realms of dazzling light. Messrs. Tacks, Hammer, and Bradawl slave, without ceasing, surrounded by glue, beer-cans, shavings, and tools, while fairies in dingy skirts practise their poses under the direction of a blustering ballet-master. But what have the public to do with this, provided the curtain rises at the proper time on the opening scene of the grand new pantomime of 'Harlequin King Canute'?

Ting-a-ring-a-ting sounds the prompter's bell, and the orchestra strikes up an overture of popular airs, to the great delight of the gallery, who recognize their favourite tunes and keep time with their feet, and to the still greater pleasure of the junior members of a numerous family of children, who crowd one another against the edge of a private box, standing literally on the tiptoe of expectation, and peer and peep and gaze in wonder, first on the brilliantly-lighted, crowded house and then on the dull green baize which shuts out fairyland.

Hark! the prompter's bell a second time, and the curtain rolls slowly up and discovers the abode of the Demon Discord. Let you and me, my dear Lounger, who have seen similar scenes scores of times, turn our backs upon the stage and watch the scenes of real life in the auditorium of the theatre this boxing night. That large box to the left, the attendant would tell you, was taken a fortnight ago by Mr. Sittymann, and there is Mr. Sittymann at the back, smiling good-naturedly, and holding his youngest in his arms, quieting her fears of the Demon Discord with acidulated

drops, and pointing out the beauties of the Bower of Everlasting Peas with a fat, stubby finger.

Mr. Sittyman, as perhaps you are aware, is a hard-working merchant, not a city magnate, but a dull, steady, plodding man, never dreaming of soaring on the wings of gigantic speculation, but content to ride to his office day by day to go through the same routine his father did before him—a man who goes home by the six o'clock omnibus to Peckham with the regularity of clockwork, and whose only dissipation in the year is this one visit to the theatre with his children on boxing night. Have you any notion, my dear Lounger, what a day this twenty-sixth of December has been to Mrs. Sittyman at Peckham, preparing for the annual festivity? What ironing of muslin frocks, sewing on of buttons to tiny garments, and finally, what bustle and confusion, packing the entire family into a cab to set off to meet papa in St. Alphage Lane.

It was a severe trial, doubtless, for Mr. Adolphus Sittyman, aged seventeen, to enter the theatre with a laughing sister of eight clinging to him, and asking absurd questions in a terribly loud voice, while a juvenile brother clutched his coat-tails—the tails of that sacred thing, a first dress-coat—and shrieked with laughter at some joke of papa's. A severe trial for Mr. Adolphus, who last pantomime season had only been Master Dolly in a jacket and lay-down collars, home from school for the Christmas holidays, but who is now a man of business, glib in City quotations, cognisant of Mincing Lane matters, and interested in the rise and fall of stock. Next to Mr. Adolphus in order of seniority is Miss Adelgitha, a blooming damsel of ten, who has, with Sittyman precocity, already attained the 'first sweetheart' stage of life, has interchanged sugarsticks with the object of her affections, and has danced with him an entire evening at Mrs. Mincing's ball. Alas, for the fickleness of the female heart! You may perceive, my observing companion, Miss Adelgitha, this twenty-sixth of December, is enslaved

anew by the Prince in the pantomime, and that her Arthur Henry, in tunic and knickerbockers, is already forgotten for the velvet-caped, silk-stockinged scion of a regal house, who puns, sings, and dances with mock hilarity before a sham castle on the boards of the Theatre Royal. Miss Rosalind Sittyman is there too, with large dark wide-open eyes, drinking in eagerly the wonderful sight before her, and Master Horace lounges in front of her, dividing his attention between a cake and the antics of the Demon Discord.

See, my good friend, the grand transformation scene is about to commence. The dismal dungeon of the Demon parts in the centre, and the realms of dazzling light are disclosed, glittering and sparkling with the greatest attainable theatrical brilliancy. Every moment fresh beauties are disclosed to the open-eyed children, who clap their tiny hands together and vie with each other in exclamatory 'oh my's,' till the culminating point is reached, and Clown, welcomed with a shout of delight, comes bounding on the stage followed by Pantaloon, while Harlequin and Columbine pose themselves in graceful attitudes in the full glare of the coloured fire.

It seems to me, my dear Lounger, though I have beguiled you into turning your back upon the stage, and you miss the dazzling splendour of Blank and Fivestars' famous transformation scene, that by looking round the house this evening you are fully repaid your admission fee. Turn from the Sittyman party, at which you have been so fixedly gazing for the last twenty minutes, and sweep the other private boxes with that powerful lorgnette of yours, and tell me what you see. Laughing children, pleased fathers, and delighted mothers? No! Ah! I perceive. You are looking into the box where those elegantly-attired children are sitting so sedately, without moving a muscle of their faces at Clown's antics and Harlequin's tricks. Who are they? Members of the aristocracy? Not a bit of it. They are the daughters of Mr. Louis Nemo, who made a fortune by supplying

the British government with hot-water bottles during the Crimean war, and who is now struggling into fashionable society, and is trying to buy an M.P. ship. Those unfortunate girls have been taught that, to be amused, is to be vulgar. See how contemptuously they look at their poor governess, who, seated in

the darkest corner of the box where she can see least, cannot restrain her laughter every now and then when any comic business is going on upon the stage. Poor thing! Heaven knows, her laughing hours are few and far between, and yet, I doubt not, Mrs. Nemo would grudge her this little merriment. But then,



you see, she is only the daughter of a brave officer who died in fighting his country's battles, while Mr. Nemo, remaining at home, made worthless hot-water bottles, which he sold at treble their value to a too-confiding administration. Little Miss Victoria Nemo is attired in the most expensive manner, and is dressed, and stiffened, and straightened to a

dangerous extent: yet I have no hesitation in saying, Miss Adelgitha Sittyman is ten times happier and merrier.

I am not preaching, my dear Lounger, that poverty is better than wealth, or that happiness is to be more easily found in grey alpaca, than in embroidered muslin; but I confess it does excite my indigna-

tion, to see those who should be merry little girls, trimmed and drilled into prim little women, discussing the fashions when they ought to be nursing their dolls, and consulting the proprieties when they should be enjoying the fresh hearty pleasant laugh of childhood.

See there, my dear Lounger, in the next box but one, is a sight which does me infinitely more good to look upon than the prim face and careful toilet of Miss Victoria Nemo. If you are an observing man, my shrewd companion, and tolerably well acquainted with London, you cannot fail to know Zero's. Joseph Zero is by profession a grocer, but by taste a theatrical critic. You must know his shop, in which the many-coloured posters of the various theatres completely hide from view the stock-in-trade; but, at any rate, there, in the box before you, you see the man himself with his family. A 'first night' at any one of the theatres would be incomplete without Zero, but the treasury is never one penny the richer for his attendance. His acquaintance with gentlemen of the theatrical profession is sufficiently large to enable him, at any time, to secure gratuitous seats for himself and friends, however crowded the house. If you like to lurk to-morrow morning in front of his shop, you will, doubtless, see Harlequin (now so nimbly capering on the stage) enter it, not by a flying leap through the window but by the door, like an ordinary mortal; and if you are patient at your post, you may have the fortune, later in the day, to see Clown, in the costume of the nineteenth century, emerge from the same door with a few sausages, neatly wrapped in paper, in his hand, instead of hanging in a long string from the capacious pocket of his professional dress. In his own neighbourhood, Mr. Zero is looked upon with awe and respect: for it is not every one who possesses the privilege of calling actors familiarly by their Christian names; and, I can assure you, in the profession his opinion is valued not a little—for hardly ever has he been known to prophesy incorrectly the success or failure of a new piece.

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Look at him now as he stands at the back of the box, his good-natured face beaming with laughter, at one of the stalest of stale pantomime tricks. He knows how it is done, he knows the man who does it, and he has seen it a hundred times before; but yet he laughs and enjoys it as much as either of the children in front of him. His heart, mind, and time are entirely given to theatrical matters. Contrast him for a moment with that middle-aged gentleman, alone in the box beneath, who, after listening and looking for some half-hour, has allowed the curtain to fall so as to shade his face, and is sleeping calmly and peacefully at the back, despite the noise of the harlequinade. That gentleman is a professional dramatic critic; and you will probably read half a column to-morrow morning, in your newspaper, written by him, eulogizing 'Harlequin King Canute,' and declaring it to be far superior to the pantomime of the previous year.

I see your glass is already pointed to another box, and by the smile upon your face I also see that you recognize some friends. The Honourable Charlie Asterisk is it? I have seen him in the Park, and, if I mistake not, in the Burlington Arcade; I have met him in Paris; I have spied him on a drag on Ascot Heath; I fell in with him once at a *petit souper*; I have noticed him in the stalls at the Opera; I—well, perhaps, as you say, I am mistaken; but you, my dear Lounger, must allow that this type of the British 'swell' is so common, that unless one has the advantage of moving in his circle, it is no easy matter to distinguish him from his friend. They both trim their whiskers to the same pattern; they both wear coats of the same make; and they both pronounce everything 'a baw,' in precisely the same tone. Observe him now, if you please, as he fingers his moustache and gazes so pertinaciously into space, disdaining to be amused by the stage performance, and give me your candid opinion respecting him. Perhaps you are right, my friend. It may be an exemplification of the fable of 'The Fox and the Grapes;' for I

D

certainly have not the honour of the acquaintance of the Honourable Charlie Asterisk, nor of the lady in the box with him; but at the same time I would observe, that I see no reason why a gentleman should be ashamed to enjoy himself. Look there: on the other side of the house is General Blankdash, with his children. You remember how he fought and led his men to victory. You know how he was honoured by his queen, and publicly thanked by his country; yet when, a few minutes since, the stage policeman tumbled over the basket of crockery, his laugh was as loud as that of any one in the theatre; yet no one considers him the less an officer and a gentleman for it.

At that small box, high up, you may well stare, for I see you recognize another friend, and in strange company. It is young Syfer, I am sure, although he is doing his best to conceal himself behind the curtain. Those very extraordinarily-dressed people with him are some country relations from whom he has expectations, who have insisted on being taken to a pantomime on Boxing-night. Harry Syfer, as you see, has naturally hidden them away in one of the most obscure corners of the house. The lady who *will* put her head, adorned with a gauze turban, so conspicuously forward, is evidently strange to a theatre and its ways: she wants to look in every direction at once—to take in the entire scene, except during the ballet, when she retires to the back of the box, in confusion. Listen: and even at this distance you will hear the hearty guffaws of her jolly-faced husband, whose red cheeks distend at each one of Clown's practical jokes, and whose brown hands meet in ecstatic claps of applause upon every occasion. It does one good to see people so thoroughly enjoying themselves; though I cannot help pitying poor Syfer, aspiring as he does to be a man of fashion—though how he manages it on the salary he gets from the Public Waste Office, in which department he is a junior clerk, no one can tell. To-morrow he will narrate to his friends, how he was at the 'Lane' in a private box; but he

will make no mention of those who accompanied and paid for him. Not that he is mean or a coward: he can use his fists well, on an emergency; but there is one thing no young man, however brave, can fight against, and that is ridicule—known better, perhaps, under the name of 'chaff.'

But, my dear Lounger, through the chinks of this interesting scene before which Harlequin and Columbine are dancing with so much animation, I can see the gleams of light for the finale, which tell me the grand Christmas pantomime of 'Harlequin King Canute' is drawing to an end, and that we must hastily sweep round the rest of the house with our lorgnettes, pausing for a few minutes at that large stage box tenanted entirely by men. It is the author's box. He was there himself a few minutes since, but has gone behind now to receive the congratulations of the manager. You may see there, however, amongst his friends, many a literary notability. There is Flasher, who cut up your friend's poems, one of the meekest and mildest-looking of elderly gentlemen, but with a tongue like a sword; there is Crasher, who has just published that astounding sensation novel, in which the heroine breaks all the laws in succession, and finally marries the man of her choice, and lives happily ever afterwards; and there is Dasher, who writes those wonderful leaders in the 'Nightly Galvanizer,' full of noble sentiment and six-syllabled words.

But the final chord is played in the orchestra, the green baize has fallen on the last scene, the box-keepers are tying holland pinafurs over the ormolu, and the vast audience is pushing and rushing and fighting its way out into the cold, slushy streets, setting us an example which we, my patient companion, had better follow, unless you choose to remain here through the night, to picture to yourself the different occupants those boxes into which we have been gazing may have had since the first opening of the theatre. You won't? Come, then, let us adjourn to a house close

at hand, and discuss what we have seen with a few oysters; and if, say dear Lounger, you consider this evening has been well spent, we will visit some other of the London theatres together, before long, for

the sake of their audiences; for to-night we have been fully occupied with the private boxes, and have not even glanced at those little worlds, the pit and gallery.

AN EXPENSIVE JOURNEY.

ONE fine morning last winter, I, Laura Fillingham, found myself at the Bedford station, waiting the arrival of the up-train from the North.

It was a warm, bright day, the beginning of December, everything, even the flat Nottinghamshire landscape, looked dreamy and pretty in the soft yellow haze, and I felt quite glad I had a journey before me.

I was altogether in a happy and comfortable state of mind, for I had taken the tickets, provided myself with a new book, seen all my luggage, consisting of three black boxes, and a small hat-case, placed safely together, and, above all, I had so far kept under my eye my maid and my dressing-case, and knew they were now both safely in the waiting-room, at the door of which I was standing.

People often talk of the inconvenience of travelling alone, but I have come to the conclusion that it is far less troublesome than being hampered with a maid. In the first place you have only yourself to look after, and your luggage, which, if you see it properly labelled, and then let it alone, is perfectly safe. But unfortunately you cannot label a respectable and rather fashionable-looking young woman, who, to the grossest ignorance of railways and everything to do with them, unites a very fair portion of self-conceit, and great faith in her own abilities.

Now in the common round of every-day life, Benson, my maid, is a useful young person, possessing an average amount of brains. But take her on a journey, once get her to a station, and she becomes neither more nor less than an utter fool. Whether the guards and porters

engross her thoughts, or whether the sandwiches and apples she makes a point of consuming immediately we have started, disagree with her, I know not, but anyhow it is an odd and undeniable fact: and from what I have observed I imagine that this peculiarity is not confined to my own specimen, but is a failing common to most of the race.

As for mine, twice has she forgotten to get out at the proper place, and has been conveyed on, heaven knows where; three times has she got out too soon, and been left behind. Only this morning did I come up just in time to have her forcibly extracted from a train on the point of starting for Sheffield. Add to this, that she has never any idea how long it will be before she has to start, that she is never ready when the train comes, and that she invariably loses the luggage if it is committed to her charge, and the reader will perceive that she is far more trouble than assistance.

However, as a maid is supposed to be the correct thing, and as I am a young lady with a certain amount of money, and a certain position to maintain, I am, though perfectly able to take care of myself, obliged to put up with the infiction.

Therefore as she is really a good girl, I thought I would begin the rather hopeless task of improving her. So I commenced by first telling her roundly of her faults, and then by committing to her charge my dressing-case, which I thought she would try to be careful of, as she knew it contained a good many valuable jewels, besides money. Do not imagine that I was running any great risk in so doing, for I knew our train was the express,

which only stopped twice before we reached London; so if I once saw her in, and kept a sharp look out at the stations, I knew I was pretty safe, and it would be a capital beginning.

Just as I had explained it all to her, the train came up, and with my lecture fresh in her head, she did her best to make a good start, for she rushed at the train the instant it stopped, never thinking of the luggage, and having tried first a third-class carriage, and then a first, I saw her at length safely established in a second, with a respectable woman next her, and my dressing-case under her feet.

Then I saw that the boxes were all right, and with a sigh of relief took my seat. When we were fairly off, and I felt sure that Benson was safe till the next station, I turned round to look at my travelling companions. Now, to tell the truth, this is a point on which I am rather particular. I always avoid a carriage with children, and generally one with ladies in also, and I must confess that when there are gentlemen, I prefer the company of young and good-looking ones. My friends used to laugh and say, 'Oh, Laura always manages to pick up some one,' and I am afraid I was rather proud of the fact, and in the habit of looking out for 'objects' to pick up, in which search I was generally pretty successful.

From this the reader may judge that I had a fair share of good looks, also I was in the habit of dressing a little too showily for a journey, and was, perhaps, rather too ready to talk, and make myself generally agreeable. In a word, I was just a little fast. I do not mind thus frankly confessing my faults, as since my memorable journey, two at least of them have been corrected. Well, I looked at my companions, and turned away in despair; nothing better than two intensely respectable, elderly men of business, both engrossed in that morning's 'Times,' which presently one of them offered to me. I read it, returned it with thanks, and then our communication ended. Then I settled myself in my corner of the

carriage and made up my mind to a dull journey.

Just when I had got quite tired of my book, and was beginning to wish for a little change, the train stopped at Grantham, and I at once put my head out of the window, to see that Benson did not escape. No—there were no signs of her; but, what was far more interesting, there was a gentleman on the platform, who, by his rugs, books, &c. was evidently a passenger. He was, without exception, the handsomest man I ever saw; tall, with fair hair and moustache, looking every inch of him a gentleman.

He walked slowly down the platform, glancing carelessly in at each carriage as he passed. When he arrived at ours he hesitated a little, and my heart began to beat quicker in my anxiety as to what his decision would be. He went on a few steps, then turned, called to a porter to open the door, and the next minute, to my great delight, was safely established opposite me. But alas! he did not seem likely to be a very lively companion, for as the train moved off, he took out a newspaper, and began to read.

However, I was not disheartened. I flattered myself that I understood gentlemen pretty well, and I knew that when his paper was read, he would want a little change, and turn naturally to me.

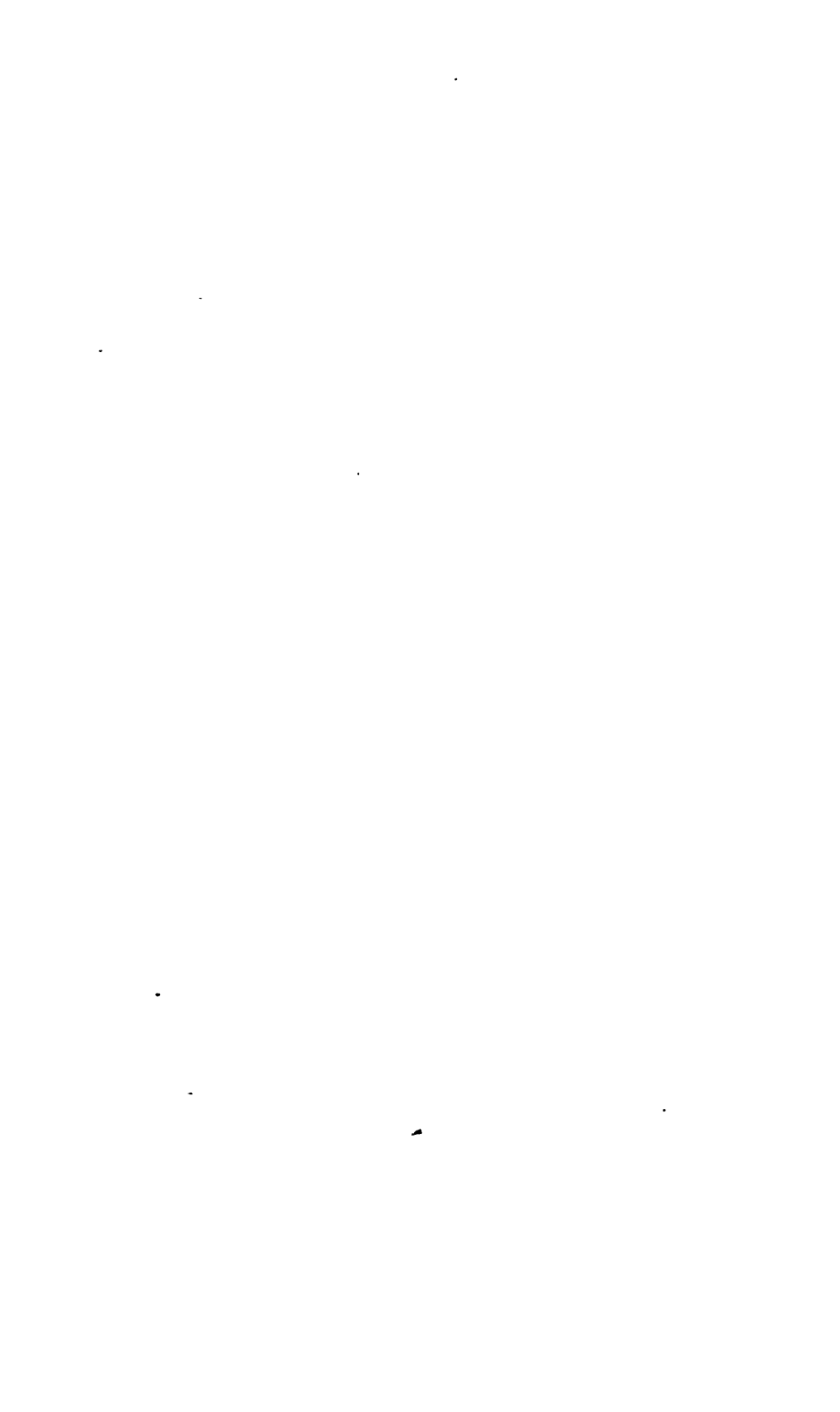
The result proved that I was right. In about twenty minutes, after a smothered yawn, and one or two glances at me, he folded my innocent rival up, put it away and spoke.

'Would you not prefer this window up? I think you must be sitting in a draught.'

The words were commonplace enough, but the voice was very pleasant, and as I met the gaze of two of the most piercing blue eyes I ever had the pleasure of beholding, I felt for the moment quite queer.

'No, thank you,' I replied; 'I do not think any one could catch cold such a lovely day.'

He made a few more commonplace remarks, and then relapsed into silence; while I sat glancing at





Drawn by J. Gordon Thompson.]

AN EXPENSIVE JOURNEY.

[See the Story.]

him out of the corners of my eyes and wishing he would speak to me again. How well I remember examining and taking notice of everything about him: his well-cut clothes, his very white hands, his travelling bag, rugs, and sticks, all perfect in their way; and I settled in my own mind that I had never seen anything so handsome as he looked, as he leant back and gazed out of the window, apparently quite unconscious of my scrutiny—more provokingly calm and impassive than anything I had ever seen.

I was quite glad when we arrived at Peterborough, for there must be some change then: and he did rouse himself up enough to ask if he could get me any refreshments.

'No, thanks,' I replied, and then we let our two companions pass us, and sat silent again, each looking out of our respective windows.

Presently I espied Benson, dressing-case in hand, making for the refreshment-room, opposite the door of which, our carriage had providentially stopped, and, as the reader may imagine, I watched in some anxiety for her return.

By degrees the passengers returned to their seats, and I became slightly uneasy. It was quite on the cards that she might be left behind.

At length the bell rang, and in another instant our rushed Benson, evidently in a state of frantic terror lest she should be late, with her mouth full, and two large buns in her hand, but—no dressing-case.

'There!' I exclaimed, jumping up in despair, 'she actually has left it behind!' and I was just going to get out to look after it, when a hand was laid upon my arm, and a quiet voice, said—

'Sit still, I will go; I shall be quicker than you: what is it?'

'My dressing-case; in the refreshment-room,' I cried.

He rushed off; and, after a minute's intense anxiety, I saw him reappear with it in his hand. He managed to scramble in just as the train was moving off, and took his seat, breathless, laughing, and, for the first time, just a little bit excited.

'That was a near shave,' he remarked.

'It was, indeed. I cannot tell you how much obliged to you I am. If it had not been for you I should never have seen it again; some one would have been sure to steal it, for, besides my ornaments, there is a good deal of money in it.'

'Yes, a small dressing-case is rather a tempting article; and this was deposited on a chair by the counter.'

'How very stupid! I really do not know how to thank you enough.'

'Oh, it was no trouble,' he replied, with a smile that made him look handsomer than ever; 'I really enjoyed it. But are you wise to entrust anything so valuable to a maid who is evidently not quite to be trusted?'

So then I gave him my reasons, together with a slight sketch of Benson's travelling exploits, at which he seemed much amused. In fact, this little incident had completely roused him, and we were soon talking together like old friends.

'Poor Benson!' I said at length; 'what a state she will be in when she discovers her loss. I really must get the guard to tell her it is safe at the next station.'

'We do not stop again,' replied he, 'which is just as well; for, having been very careless, she deserves to be uncomfortable. Perhaps if she is very miserable, she may remember the next time.'

'Oh! I have had enough of her memory,' returned I, laughing. 'I will take very good care she has not charge of anything to-morrow.'

'To-morrow!' he repeated, looking slightly surprised. 'Do you mean you are going back to-morrow?'

'No; but I am going down into Dorsetshire—to Crewkerne.'

'That's odd,' he remarked, with a smile. 'I am going to Yeovil myself; to see some friends who live about there. Do you know Dorsetshire well?'

'No, I never was there before.'

'And what time are you going?'

My heart gave quite a bound. Did he mean to come with me? I blushed a little as I said—

'I can hardly tell. I am to write this evening and let my friends know what time to meet me. I have some shopping to do, so I cannot start very early. But I really know nothing about the trains.'

'I have a Bradshaw here, if that will help you,' he said, a little eagerly. 'There's a train at 1:30; will that suit you?'

'Yes, I think it will,' I replied, rather doubtfully, for it was later than I had intended; but, guessing that it was the one he meant to go by, I thought it better to acquiesce. 'It will be dark before I get there; but that won't much matter, and it will give me plenty of time in town.'

'So that is settled,' he said, with a smile. And then we went on talking so pleasantly that I never noticed, at the time, what I discovered when I thought it all over afterwards, namely, that by degrees he drew from me my name, position, home, hundreds of little things that I should never have dreamt before of telling a stranger; while the whole time I never found out more about him than the one solitary fact, that he had some friends living near Yeovil.

Arrived at King's Cross, the first thing that met my eyes was Benson, dissolved in tears, rushing wildly about in a vain search after the dressing-case, which she seemed to expect to meet somewhere about. She assured me she had never lost sight of it till after Peterbro', and that she was morally certain it had been spirited away from under her feet by some badly-disposed person, probably one of her fellow-travellers. Her face of utter astonishment, when I showed it to her, and told her where it was found, was indescribable.

'Shall I take it now, Miss?' she asked, humbly.

'No,' I replied, rather sharply. 'Go and sit down in that cab, and try not to lose yourself too. I will see after the luggage.'

Which I did, assisted by my friend; and when he put me in the cab and wished me good-bye, I felt very glad that I should see him again the next day.

Never had my old aunt, at whose house I was to sleep, seemed to be so deaf and tiresome before: and my shopping, the next morning, was not half so interesting as I had expected. All the time I was haunted by a pair of provoking blue eyes, which somehow *would* come up and force me to think of them.

'What nonsense!' I exclaimed to myself, impatiently. 'What, I, who have been in love twice, and flirted hundreds of times, to make a fool of myself about a man I've only seen once! It's too absurd. I won't think of him any more.'

But this was easier said than done; and I felt very glad when I was fairly seated in the cab, on my way to the station. Once there, I was in such a state of nervous expectation, that I left Benson to see the luggage down, and pay the cabman, while I went for the tickets. I took them, caught sight of a tall figure, which made my heart beat quicker, and then returned to see after my belongings.

I found Benson in the thick of a fierce battle with the cabman, who, seeing her simplicity, had of course charged double his proper fare; while she, thinking to be very sharp indeed, refused to pay him even his due.

What the end would have been I know not; but at this stage I abruptly interfered, and paid the cabman his money so decidedly that he drove off without another word.

As I turned round, there was my fellow-traveller, with an odd sort of smile on his face.

'Good morning,' he said, as he shook hands with me eagerly. 'I have been admiring the way in which you disposed of that cabman. You evidently can take care of yourself.'

'I ought to know how by this time,' I replied. I was vexed with myself for blushing, as I knew I did, and answered a little coolly.

'You have not much time to spare,' he remarked. 'Let me take your dressing-case.'

Which he accordingly did; put us both in a carriage, and then went off to see after Benson and the

luggage, while I leant idly back, acknowledging to myself, half unwillingly, that it was very pleasant to have some one to manage everything for you.

Presently he returned.

'It is all right now,' he said. 'Is there anything more I can do for you?'

'Oh, no; thanks; I am quite ashamed to have given you so much trouble.'

Again that strange smile rose to his lips; but as he took his seat it faded; for at the other end of the carriage sat a middle-aged, rather grim-looking lady, who surveyed him critically.

'Bother!' he said, in an undertone to me. 'Why on earth did she get in here? I do hate any one of that sort in the carriage; it stops one talking.'

'Never mind,' I whispered, soothingly, already nervously anxious that he should be pleased. 'She won't trouble you long, for I saw her ticket, and it is only to Surbiton.'

'Oh!' and his face brightened, and he bestowed no more black looks on the unfortunate lady, though he was evidently very glad when we were rid of her, and so, I must confess, was I; for I knew by a little arrangement I had witnessed between him and the guard, that we should be troubled with no more fellow-passengers.

Never shall I forget the few hours that followed. I grew utterly heedless of time and place. I neither knew nor cared how far we had got. I forgot Benson entirely. I thought of nothing but him; his soft voice, his handsome face, and those strange blue eyes. And all the time he talked away easily, telling me strange adventures that had befallen him in all quarters of the globe, mingled with scraps of information about himself, which left me only more intensely anxious to know more.

'You are tired,' he said, suddenly, at last.

'A little,' I replied.

Though I had not acknowledged it before, I found that excitement, and the fact of my not having slept

the previous night, were beginning to take effect upon me. He produced a flask from his pocket.

'Drink a little of this,' he said. 'It will soon set you up.' And I complied. 'Now try and go to sleep. You have plenty of time, and you really look quite knocked up.'

I looked out of the window; it was rapidly growing dark, and somehow I did not fancy going off to sleep in such a hurry under the circumstances.

'I couldn't if I tried,' I remarked.

'Nonsense; I bet you anything that I could send you off in two minutes if I liked.'

'How?' I asked, quickly.

'Do you believe in mesmerism?' he said, quietly.

'No, nonsense,' I replied, laughing, though I began to feel slightly uncomfortable: if ever eyes looked as if they could mesmerise, those opposite me were they. They were fixed on me now, firmly, unwaveringly, and I certainly was beginning to feel unaccountably sleepy.

I said 'Don't!' in rather a feeble way, and his smile, in reply, is the last thing I clearly remember. Then the carriage, the growing darkness, the faint light of the lamp, and his face, all mingled together in one indistinguishable chaos. The noise of the train grew fainter and fainter, little by little. I felt my eyes close, and I knew no more.

When I awoke it was quite dark, that is to say, quite dark outside. Within the lamp still burned feebly. I felt heavy and confused. My head ached; it was some seconds before I clearly recollected where I was. The whistle of the engine recalled me to myself; suddenly I remembered all. I sat up and looked opposite—no one was there. I rubbed my eyes, and looked again. No, I was quite alone. A sickening sort of feeling, half dread, half disappointment, crept over me.

'I must be dreaming!' I exclaimed, impatiently (and yet I *knew* I was not). 'I wonder what o'clock it is.'

I put my hand down to my watch, but it was gone! Yes, and the chain too!

Thoroughly awake now, I got up and looked well about me, for my dressing-case was nowhere to be seen. It had been under my feet; now I hunted the whole carriage through in vain.

'It has been stolen!' I exclaimed. 'Who can have done this?'

A sudden suspicion crossed my mind, which was as instantly rejected.

No; though my companion had certainly disappeared in a most mysterious and unaccountable manner, I would not entertain such an idea for a moment. I looked for my travelling-bag next. Yes, there it was, all right; but on further examination I discovered that every article of the least value, including my purse and the key of my dressing-case, was gone. My railway ticket was carefully pinned to the lining of my bag. Whoever had committed the robbery had done so in the most scientific manner, and had evidently had plenty of time, and again that dreadful suspicion darted through my brain.

Happening to look down at my hands I discovered, what I had not before noticed, that my gloves were off (I found them rolled up in a neat ball in my pocket), and my rings, some of them of great value, had totally disappeared; also every article of jewellery I had had on, including a gold bracelet, sleeve-studs, locket, and even earrings. I was very glad when the train stopped at Crewkerne.

'I have been robbed!' I announced, as I got out. Whereupon ensued a great hubbub. 'When?' 'Where?' 'By whom?' 'Of what?'

'I do not know, for it was while I was asleep.'

Then I told them all I knew, carefully repressing the only piece of information that could have been of any use to them. For some inexplicable reason, I carefully avoided all mention of my handsome travelling companion.

I pursued the same course when I arrived at my friend's house. Better to lose all my worldly goods than to tell such a story against myself. I knew I should never

hear the end of it, so on that point I discreetly held my tongue, though just at that time I could ill afford to lose so much money.

But I think my greatest vexation was the sight of Benson's complacent face. She made no particular remark, but I knew by her self-satisfied looks that she considered that all her former scoldings were now amply avenged. As the reader may guess, the authorities were utterly unsuccessful in their attempt to trace my lost property, and I should never have been positive what had become of it had I not, two or three weeks later, received the following epistle, which, in its cool familiarity and matchless impudence, is rather a curiosity. It was written on good paper, in a gentlemanly hand, and bore the London post-mark.

Enclosed was a little gold locket, containing the photograph of a gentleman and a lock of hair. It ran as follows:—

'Dec. 20, 1865.'

'DEAR MISS FILLINGHAM,—I enclose a little trifle which I found on your watch-chain. It may be of value to you, and is of very little to me, so do not give me too much credit for returning it. Your dressing-case, being directed, furnished me with your address.

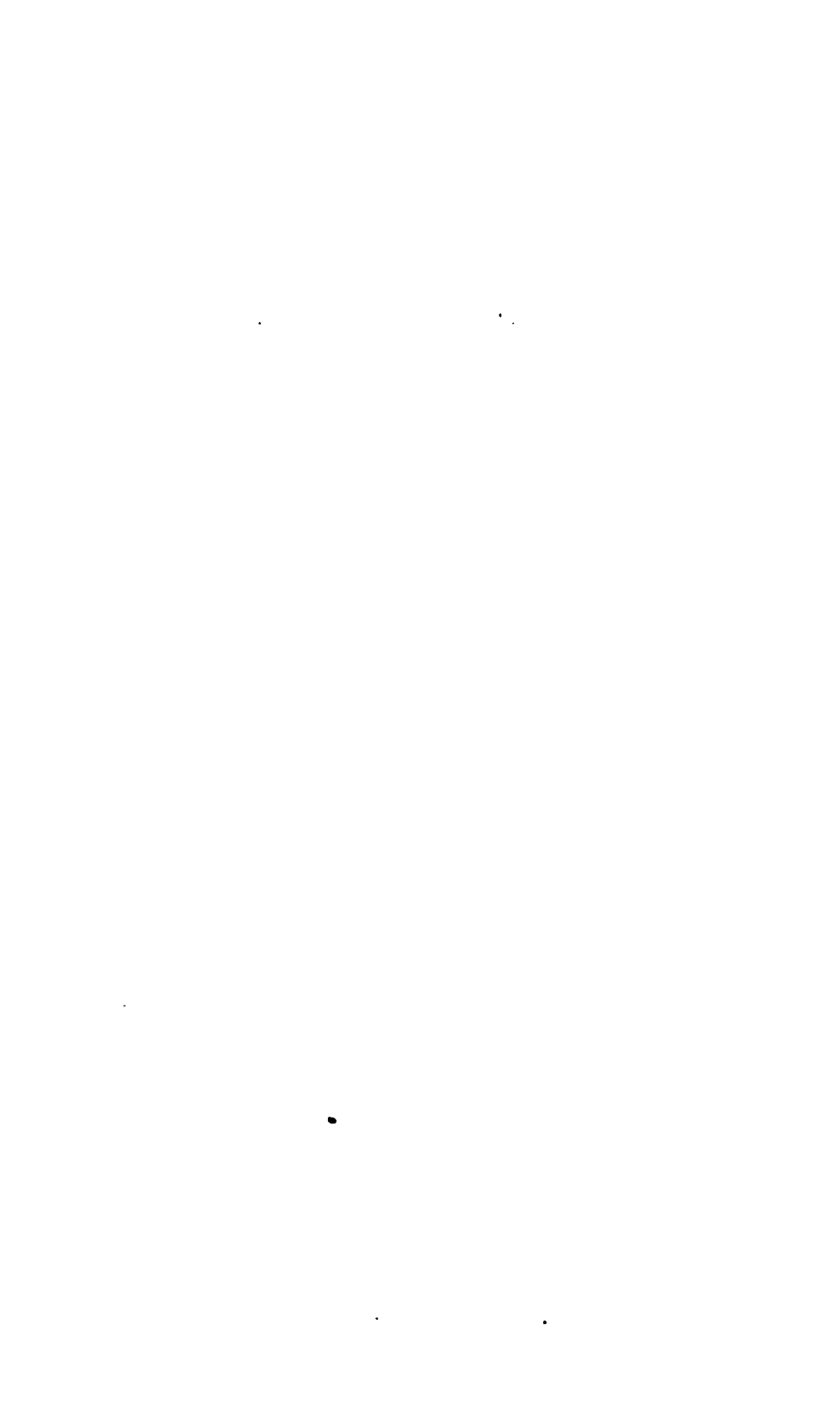
'I am sorry that after all your trouble you did not manage to keep it safe till your journey's end, and I wish you to know that had not my affairs been in such an unprecedentedly complicated state, I should never have behaved so ill to you. I must also apologize for leaving you in such an unceremonious manner at Yeovil, but you see that, under the circumstances, I had no choice. Hoping you found your railway ticket, and wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy new year,

'Believe me ever,

'Your devoted

'FELLOW TRAVELLER.'

And that was all I ever heard of the matter. Of course I kept the contents of the letter to myself, and on my return home, as the reader may imagine, I did not look out quite so eagerly for handsome travelling companions.





Drawn by T. S. Seecombe.]

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

[See the Poem.]

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

(ILLUSTRATED BY T. S. SECCOMBE.)

BRIGHT and fresh, if a trifle too frosty
 For scent were we after the hare,—
 The morning is splendidly bracing,
 The country delightful, though bare.
 The sky is a turquoise in colour,
 The sun, while it dazzles the eyes,
 Warms the skaters, but six solid inches
 The ice on the brook-water lies;
 The wood in the distance is purple,
 With barely a leaf, green or sere;
 It is surely a day of good omen
 That brings in a Happy New Year.

What, darling, astir, and so early?
 Your hands, both your hands, within mine:
 Your face is as fresh as the morning,
 Your eyes with its happiness shine:
 The sun turns your hair to its colour,
 There's nothing in Nature so bright;
 Forgive if my words seem to flatter,
 They only express my delight.
 My heart like a bubble is floating,
 So buoyant, and yet so sincere,
 As, with all its intensest devotion,
 I wish you a Happy New Year!

All that happiness means I desire you,
 All that Heaven bestows on its own,
 May it be without bounds, or its limits
 Be set by your wishes alone;
 Life is chequer'd, but then the pure metal
 Is lighten'd, you know, by alloy,
 And life sometimes gives by its sorrow
 The zest that we find in its joy.
 But there, I am growing didactic
 And wrongly detaining you here,
 Hand in hand, while I only intended
 To wish you a Happy New Year!

So happy! Oh, were I the master
 The genii were forced to obey,
 Summer blisses should round your existence,
 Your life should be one sunny day.
 Yet see how the year in its waning,
 With sunshine and beauty will glow!
 And so o'er life's gloom all its brightness,
 A heart truly loving can throw;
 And I—but your blushing forbids me,
 I will not provoke it, for fear
 You should doubt how unselfishly fondly
 I wish you a Happy New Year!

W. S.

MRS. BROWN'S CHRISTMAS STORY.

WE was a bit of a family party the Sunday arter Christmas day, for our Liza had come up to town with her husband and his mother, thro' the old woman a wantin' advice; not as there's anything much the matter with her, but always must be on the fidget about something, and a fancyin' as she were consumptive, as I says, 'Rubbish at your time of life; its only the indigestion,' as the doctor proved my words true thro' 'avin' suffered that way myself with a pain between my shoulders like a carvin' knife.

So as they was up Brown agreed as we should 'ave em to dinner on the Sunday. Jane she come and her husband, and Mr. and Mrs. Barnes, as is Brown's own sister, and we got on very pleasant through everything bein' done to a turn and nothing forgot.

So in the twilight arter dinner we was a sittin' over the fire with a jug of punch as Brown had brewed beautiful, with some roasted chesnuts and oranges, with almonds and raisins, and we was a chat-tin' agreeable, and our Jane says, 'Oh, mother, do tell us a story!'

I says, 'Me tell you a story, my dear! why, I ain't done sich a thing since our Joe was in the measles, and nothing else wouldn't keep him quiet.'

Eliza she says, 'Oh, tell us about your fust place, mother,' and they all says, 'Do,' except Brown, as was a noddin', and Barnes he's one as will listen for ever over his pipes; but I didn't hardly like, thro' it bein' a long tale, but they all would 'ave it, Barnes included, and Brown even he said 'Do.' And so I did; not as I can bear to think on it myself without a turn, for I'm sure if I was to live to a thousand, I should never forget it, tho' p'raps it's as well to let them things drop; but, law, bless you, it ain't in natur for to forget, as will keep a bringin' things back to the recollections constant.

So I makes up the fire, and begins. It seems only like a few months ago as it all 'appened, and it must be 'ard on forty years—for it was my first place—and me only just turned fifteen, and a nice lady she were, in the name of Mrs. Crowley, but very young to be married, and him one of them as seems to live by their wits, as the sayin' is, and in my opinion only another word for cadging, as 'ad run away with her from boardin' school; and I heard say by the lady of the house where they lodged, as when they fust come she hadn't 'ardly a change

of anything to stand upright in; and when I went to her thro' a aunt of mine as did their washin', her baby was only three weeks old, and nothin' comfortable about her, a lodgin' in what they called Montpelier, down Brompton way, as is French for mild air I've heer'd say, as is just what she wanted, as was thin as a lath, with a cough enough to shake the soul out of her body, as the sayin' is.

I don't think as he was a bad sort, that young man, as far as I can recollect, if he'd 'ad money, but thought a deal too much about dress, and cigars, as was just a coming in fashionable then, and would bring her home a gownd as wasn't no sort of use, and made her go to the play when more fit to be in her bed, and that infant a shrieking, and me not able to pacify it no how, and him a flyin' in a rage if she said she'd rather stop at home; and the landlady give 'em warning the very next morning, and him a talking as grand as bull beef, as the sayin' is, and taking of a cottage down Old Brompton, as was a dismal hole, and as damp as a washus.

He'd got 'old of a bit of money somehow, for he had everything new and as fine as a horse's head hisself; but I could see as she wasn't easy in her mind, and would often say to him, 'Now, Alfred, we don't want them things,' as he'd bring 'ome; and no more she didn't, for a quieter lady I never know'd, and left alone night arter night, as would sit in the twilight a playing of the music; and I've took in the candles and see her a delinge in tears often and often.

Then that baby never seemed for to thrive, as it's my opinion the place was too damp for it, thro' bein' built on the ground, and the sun never on the back rooms as 'ad a mouldy smell.

Whatever teeth is given us for I can't think, for I'm sure they're never worth the bother of cutting them first, to shed 'em agin directly, and 'ardly one in your 'ead by the time as you're forty, not as I did ought to speak, thro' mine a being as firm as rocks, as which is only nat'ral, thro' their bein' always rocky from a gal.

I'm sure that Godfrey's cordial as that child 'ad constant didn't do it no good, as my dear mother told me not to give it a drop one day as she come to see me. Nor more I never did, tho' hard work to keep it quiet, and her out for 'ours. Not thro' her own wishes, but all his doin', as was the most overbearin' party as

ever I met, a makin' her go out with him on a minnit's notice, as she'd do for the sake of peace.

I'm pretty certain as she did use to dose that child of a night with that Godfrey, to keep it quiet on account of her husband, for the way he'd go on if it disturbed him was dreadful; and often I've had to go and fetch it away in the dead of the night, thro' him a revin' and a swearin' in rage when woke by it.

Not as I didn't like him, for he wasn't a bad heart neither, and when that child died in convulsions in my arms, with its eye-teeth, he went on like a mad man, thro' comin' 'ome just afore it 'appened rather the worse for what he'd took, as 'was his 'abits. Not as I expected the child to die, thro' 'avin' no experience, as could tell in a minnit now by the look of the face, and that poor young thing a sayin' to me not five minnits afore as it was better, and all the fault of that 'umbuggin' doctor as was called in and said there wasn't no danger, and quite short in bein' brought out of his bed, as I went for him myself jest on the stroke of twelve, and when he come he didn't stop two seconds, and the child a corpse before one.

I'm sure I nearly broke my 'eart over that child's funeral as I follared to the grave in New Chelsea Churchyard, where it lays now, pretty dear; and to see her was enough to cut you to the quick, as the sayin' is, as would go and sit by the grave, and bring 'ome bits of grass, and not the money to bury it decent, nor yet get a bit of mournin', as is a comfort in sorrow; and I'm sure if it hadn't been for my mother a bringin' me a old black skirt, I never could 'ave follared it decent myself.

I don't think that poor thing was ever right arter that, and as to him, he come 'ome intoxicated constant, and then not to stop. And he took to goin' out of a evening, and layin' abed nearly all day, as well he might, thro' never getting there till daylight.

It was doleful work a stoppin' with her, as I couldn't bear to leave, tho' wages I never got after the first month or so, in that cottage; and 'adn't a bit of boot nor shoe to my feet. As to livin', we didn't get much more than tea; and sometimes I'd 'ave half a pint of porter at night with a bit of bread and cheese.

She never took nothing to keep her up, but would sit and wring her hands. I shall never forget the weather, for it was a wet September, and what with that, and the days a drawin' in, I don't think as ever I was so dull in my life. As to her, it made my heart bleed for to

see her a gettin' thinner and thinner every day, and him only comin' 'ome of a Sunday; and the last time as he did so there was a fellow with him as give me a turn to look at, with a face as was flamin' fire thro' drink, and bushy red whiskers, as begun a talking his nonsense to me, but I pretty soon settled his 'ash, thro' bein' brought up fir to know my place, and see as others kep' theirn, and I could see my dear missus shudder at his nasty free ways, as kep' on a talking and laughing like a torpedo a blowin'.

It was the Tuesday arter that Sunday as she went out early, and hadn't been gone not ten minutes, when two fellows rung at the bell, as I peeped at thro' a little gratin' as was in the gate, and says, 'What's your business?'

One on 'em says, 'Open the gate, and I'll tell you.'

'No,' I says, 'you won't, for I sha'n't open it;' and I slips to the little trap as shut up that gratin', for I somehow didn't like the looks of them parties, and I did long for missus to come in, for them fellows rung like mad at the bell ever so long, and would no doubt 'ave been over the wall but for the broken glass bottles as was along the top, and iron spikes over the gate, thro' the 'ome 'avin' once been a doctor's as kep' a mad-house, as was always a tryin' to escape, as they will, even with your eye on them constant.

It was pretty near six, and a soakin' rain, when she come in, poor thing; and as I opens the gate for her as she ordered me to, tho' I'd told her about them men thro' the gratin', but she says with a sigh, 'They must come in, it's no use,' and so they did, along with her, a scowlin' at me and a sayin' as they was come to take possession, and as they did, and kep' it too, least ways one, and if he didn't want me for to go out for pipes and baccy for him, and half and half, and to find the money into the bargain. As I says, 'No, never.' We had to get his meals tho', and 'ard work it was, I can tell you, to keep that fellow, as was a savage Jew—and always a creespin' about, and give me such a fright a ketchin' hold on me goin' out of the gate a takin' a few things to the washerwoman, as he would insist on lookin' into, as made me up and give 'im a bit of my mind.

I says, 'There ain't nothing in that bag but things for the wash, and if you dares to touch 'em I'll leave my marks on you,' as made 'im give in. I was young in them days, and didn't know as he was right and I was wrong.

I'm sure that poor dear lady wasn't one as would take a rag out of the place, and sent me for to pledge a little gold locket and other things, for to get the money to buy that fellow's dinner, and so things went on for near three weeks, and then they come and put things up in lots and 'ad a sale.

It was the night afore that sale as I was sittin' with that poor dear soul, as kep' a startin' at the sound of them broker's men, as was pullin' the things about; we was in a little breakfast-room, with a bit of fire, just the last of the coals, and I know'd she'd had nothin' to cat since the mornin', as was only a bit of toast.

She says, 'Martha, 'ave you 'ad any dinner?'

I says, 'Oh I've done very well, thankee, mum;' as a bit of bread and cheese and a drop of beer was quite enough for me, as she couldn't touch. And as to that broker's man, he was half starved latterly, I'm sure, for there wasn't nothin' for him many a day but bread and cheese. He wasn't the first one as come, but another, as turned out better than might have been expected, and told me his own sorrers, as 'ad a bedridden wife with an idiot son, or he'd never 'ave took to this way of life as he said was harrering up to the feelins'.

Well, as I was a sayin', it was a Friday evenin', about eight, we was a sittin', missus and me. I'd coaxed her to 'ave a cup of tea and got her a egg, as she couldn't eat, and she was a sayin', 'You'll go to your mother in the mornin', Martha.'

I says 'Yes, mum; but if I may be so bold, where are you a goin'?' 'Oh,' she says, 'my dear 'usband will send me word where to go;' and just then there come a loud ring at the bell, and who should be there but master.

He give me a awful turn as I let him in, for he was that haggard and blood-shot, and spoke that hoarse, as you couldn't 'ardly 'ear 'im. Poor thing, how I did pity her, for she said, in a wild sort of voice, 'Alfred! what has brought you here?' And then he said as he'd come for her, as they must fly, and then he sat down and begun a rocking of hisself about, and didn't seem to 'ave no power for to act.

As to her, poor dear, rats was nothin' to her weakness, and her legs was all of a tremble under her as she tried for to get him to move; for I'd fetched her bonnet and shawl, as she'd told me to. She says to me, as they was goin' out, 'Martha, I ain't got nothing to give you but this,' and if she didn't take a little

morrocky leather work-case out of her pocket as she was always a using. She says, 'Keep it for my sake, for a kinder-'arted gal I never knowed;' and she says, 'You'll go and look at my darlin's grave, won't you? and see as she ain't disturbed;' but law bless you I couldn't speak for sobbin' fit to break my 'eart, and I took her 'and and would have kissed it, but she took me in her arms and give me that lovin' kiss, as I'm sure come from her 'eart. And then they went off together thro' the pourin' rain, and I set by the bit of fire till it went out, and then crep' up to my bed, as was all of a uproar thro' them broker's men 'aving lotted the things; but I slep' on some mattresses in a corner of the room, tho' not for long, thro' bein' woked up by a ringin' that violent as made me jump out of my skin, and then I thought as it was the broker's men come early, for it wasn't daylight; so I listens, and heerd the man let 'em in, and then there was strange voices a sayin' 'Where is the gal?'

So down I goes, and if there wasn't Bow-street officers as they did used to be called afore the new police come in, as well I remembers a seein' the fust a standin' in Sloane-street, with my own eyes, one Michaelmas day, the year as they was fust brought in.

You could tell them Bow-street officers anywheres thro' red waistcoats and crowns on their buttons.

As soon as I come down stairs they says, 'Where is he?'

I says, 'Where's who?' They says, 'Come, none of your nonsense, as won't do with us.'

I says, 'I'm sure I don't want none of yourn.'

They says, 'Is you aware as we're law officers?'

I says, 'I dare say you may be, but what's that got to do with me?'

'Why,' they says, 'we've a warrant agin Alfred Crowley for forgery, and wherever is he got to?'

I says, 'How should I know?'

I suppose as they see they wasn't going to get much out of me, so they says as they must be off, and did accordin'.

I was all over in a tremble, and I asks the broker's men as was just come in, what they'd do with him if he was caught, and when they told me as it was a 'anging matter, I reeled and fell like a ox.

When I come round I felt quite foolish in my 'ead, and sat on the stairs in my bonnet and shawl, till my aunt she come to fetch me in the cart, about

nine, as she did used to take home the washin' in, thro' my box being 'eavy, as them brokers let me take away thro' a seain' as I 'adn't nothing in but my own clothes.

I'm sure when I told my dear mother about it being forgery, she says, 'He's a dead man, my dear; for well she remembered Dr. Dodd, as nobody couldn't save, tho' they went down on their knees to King George upon the throne, and him a clergyman as did ought to have knowed better, but was sorry for it at the last, no doubt, and wrote a lovely book in prison, and may repentance never come too late is what I says.

I could not rest at home, I says, 'Mother, let me go up to Bow-street and ask about him, for I'm sure as he's caught fast enough by this time, for they couldn't never get far with no money and as tired as dogs.'

If ever there was a kind-hearted ooman, it was my dear mother, for she says, 'Martha, you 'adn't best go a mixin' yourself up with no forgeries, but I'm proud on you as my child for to have a right feelin' for that poor lady, tho' wages you have not seen, nor yet your meals reg'lar as any one may look to; but,' she says, 'I'll go up to Bow-street with you myself' as ian't very far from where she was a livin', near Soho-square, thro' bein' a clear starcher.

I never shall forget the all-overiah tremble as I felt when we got to Bow-street, and my mother asked the officer at the door about Alfred Crowley.

'Oh, he was nabbed fast enough,' says the man, 'a wanderin' along the Old Kent Road.'

'Wherever is the lady?' I asks.

'Lady,' says the fellow, 'there was a draggled-tail creetur, without a bit of shoe to her foot, along with him, as shrieked frightful when they took him away.'

'Where is she?' I asks.

'How do I know?' says he.

'Won't they let her be along with him?' I asks.

'Bless you, no,' says he. 'She'll be allowed to see him now and then, afore his trial,' and off he walks.

I was a gettin' quite sick and giddy, so my dear mother took me out of the place a sayin' as we couldn't do no good. I could not bear to go home, it seemed like a turnin' agin that poor soul in her troubles; but it was late in the day, and my mother she wanted for to get back thro' bein' busy, but I said as I should like to go to Coldbath Fields, and ask at the prison, and tho' tired, if she didn't walk off there.

We couldn't hear nothing about the poor lady at the prison, tho' the man said at the gate as she had been there a 'our ago a askin' when she could see the prisoner.

We turned away, with a nasty rain, and mud up to your ankles, and a gettin' dusk. Just as we was a turnin' into Holborn I says, 'There she is,' and sure enough she was, with her cloak soaked thro', and her beautiful 'air a 'angin' down under her bonnet, and all bedaubed with mud. I rushes at her, a sayin', 'Oh, my dear missus, wherever are you a goin'?'

She give a start, and says, 'Martha, don't stop me; I'm in a hurry, my good gal.' And I see by her eye as she wasn't herself quite; and then my mother come up, as spoke very soothin', a sayin' as she didn't ought to tire herself out.

While we was a speakin' she turned that deadly pale, as made me think she was a dyin', and it's lucky as my mother was there, for I never could have held her up, or called a 'ackney coach, for there wasn't no 'busses nor yet cabs in them days, and we got her in, and took her to my mother's own bed, as 'ad only two rooms just off Wardour-street; as she kep' her house very nice, thro' a gettin' up lace and fine things, as had been her support ever since father was took, with seven shillins a week pension, and me a goin' to service thro' a bit of temper, as I don't regret, or never should 'ave been able to 'ave 'elped that poor dear creetur.

She was awful bad, and the doctor as was called in said as it was murder for to have let her go about as she 'ad. We didn't say nothing, mother nor me, about her circumstances, and did not know what to do about him. I says, 'I never can bring myself for to go and see him in prison, as would break his 'cart.' Then says mother, 'I'll go, for live thro' the night she won't, unless a turn comes.' But somehow mother couldn't get in to see him, and neither on us bein' scholars, in course couldn't write.

Poor dear lady, I never thought as she'd know us agin, a layin' sometimes a ravin' and singin' and then a moanin', but she got over it somehow, as puzzled the doctor, but I'm sure she'd better 'ave died, leastways we didn't ought to talk like that as don't know nothin'.

It was more than a week afore she seemed clear in her 'ead, but it come sudden like, for I was a sittin' by her, when she says, 'Martha!'

I says, 'What is it, mum?'

She says, 'I've been very ill, but I'm

better,' and she spoke with her voice that low, a whisperin' like.

She says, 'Are we alone?'

I says, 'Yes.'

She says, 'Where is he?'

I says, 'Where you knows.'

She nodded her 'ead, and didn't say no more.

From that time she started for to get better rapid, and was a sittin' up in three days, a writing a letter to him, as I took myself, and waited for a answer.

Oh! how her eyes glistened when I come back with his answer, as made her turn deadly pale; and then she wrote a long letter as I posted myself for her, off to Scotland somewheres.

Didn't she wait anxious for a answer to that letter, and wrote to him in prison every day; and it was as much as mother and me could do to keep her back from goin' to him; but at last she begged that 'ard as I went with her myself in a coach, and never shall forget her when she come a totterin' out, not as she give way, oh, dear, no; she'd a lion's 'cart in that little body of hers. You should 'ave seen her the day as she got her answer from Scotland, as was money, tho' it come with bitter words, I should say, for I see her eyes a flashin' as she read it; and out she went with me, in a coach, and 'ad to go to a bank as she got money from, and then she goes to see the lawyer as was to 'elp her good gentleman thro' his troubles.

The moment as I see that lawyer I give up all 'opes, for of all the solemn looks as any one ever did put on, that lawyer did.

As soon as we was in his private room, for she made me come in, and a nice dingy 'ole it was, full of boxes round the walls, and names wrote on 'em, she says, 'Oh, Mr. 'Unter, save 'im; here's money!'

He says, 'My good lady, be calm. We'll do the best we can.' But I see him a lookin' 'ard at them bank-notes, as he seemed a itchin' for to get 'old on. He was a elderly man, and wore what they did use to call cashum boots, with a powdered 'ead, and a long chain and bunch of seals a 'angin' down.

She says, 'Pay anything, but save his life!' And then she undid her bonnet as if choking.

I must say as the lawyer noted kind, and told me to take care on her; and so we went to the prison, for she'd got leave for to see her husband, and was going there then. I don't think as she'd know'd what she was about arf her time, but she give my mother over thirty pounds to take care on, and said

the lawyer'd got the rest. Every day did she go to that prison till the day as he was to be tried on; and nice weather it was, the middle of November, with a fog that thick that you might 'see out it with a knife, as the sayin' is.

We was at that court, mother and me, by eight, a waitin' to be let in, as she'd got leave for us, and there we stood over so long in the cold; and if it 'adn't been for her sake I should 'ave died with fear, to see that gloomy place, and them officers, as I thought every one was Jack Ketch, a lookin' that awful.

She, poor dear, 'ad gone for to see 'im, and was let into a place down below, near the lawyers; and then the judges come in, as was kind lookin' men, but 'owever they can sit there and put any one to death cool like that puzzles me. When I see my poor dear master put up in a place by himself, and every one a looking at him, I felt a chokin', and then there was a dead silence, and my 'art was a thumping agin my bosom like water-works.

The place was that dismal thro' lamps and candles a burnin', for gas wasn't reglar in then, but only oil lamps. Where I was a settin' it was very full, and that close and muggy to make any one sick; and when I could make out what they was about, I found as a party were a denyin' as ever he'd signed that paper as master was accused about. I was so pleased, but soon found out as he was the one as was goin' agin master, tho', as I said to my dear mother, 'Why ever ain't he good-natured, and might as well say as it were his writin', and I'm sure missus would get the money paid back; but, law, some people is that 'ard and graspin', like the man as seized Mrs. Oballin's goods, but was obligated to give 'em up thro' overstraining himself in takin' more than was his rights.

There was one old gentleman in a white wig as was something like a clergyman in his dress; he spoke up for master beautiful, and said as it was all rubbish that bein' his writin', and I thought as they'd let him go, oos the gentleman sat down, and looked quite satisfied, and so did them juries seem to be, for his last words was a orderin' them to restore him to his agonized wife, and so I thought as they went out for the purpose; but they wasn't long away, and when they come back there was a deadly silence.

I tried for to see my dear missus, but she was too much under where I was. Well, I heard a party ask them juries their verdict, and if one on 'em didn't

say, 'Guilty.' I says, 'No, never,' and all the place seemed to turn round with me. My mother put her 'and afore my mouth, and I could see the tears a runnin' down her face. And when I looked agin, that judge 'ad put on a black cap, and was a talkin' to master solemn.

Oh, them awful words, I never shall forget them. And when he said, 'Have mercy on your soul,' I heard a noise below, and says, 'Let me out, let me out!' And so parties made way for me, and I was down in the passage below in a instant, and there was my dear missus, they'd just brought her out, a layin' like stone dead on a bench, and these stood the lawyers.

I says, 'Let me come to her,' and so they did. And mother she come down, and we got her into a coach, and 'ome we drove; but she never spoke nor give no sign of life: and the doctor he come, and said as he 'sped she never might.

Towards night she did come to, but only to rave that awful as there wasn't no 'oldin' her, and they wanted for to take her away, but I says, 'Never shall she be took away: if she goes I goes.' My poor mother was much put out, but she stood up too for her. And then she got more quiet, but never seemed to know us.

That lawyer came once, and shed tears, a secin' on her with all her lovely 'air cut off, and me with constant cold wingar and water to her 'ead, as was all leech bites and cupping the back of her neck, and would 'ave done more but my mother says, 'No; you've tortured her enough, and I won't 'ave it done. Let her die in peace.'

They hung him three weeks arter his trial, and I see 'im the day before, as was the Sunday, and he'd been a 'carin' a sermon; and when they took me thro' them dark passages to his cell, I thought as death would be better than bein' there.

He was wery quiet, poor dear, and looked so 'andsome, and spoke cheerful at first, till I begun for to tell 'im about her. I didn't say the wust, in course, only a statin' as she dared not be moved.

He says, 'Martha, give her my last undyin' love: ask her to forgive me the cruel wrongs I've done her,' and then he give way, and says, 'Oh! if I could but hear her say, "Alfred, I forgive you."' I says, 'Law, sir, in course she does; for I'm sure no angel ain't more constant at her prayers, and always for you.' He give me a bit of his hair for her, and then he shook hands with me, and says, 'May God reward you for your kindness to her.'

I couldn't bear no more. I bust out cryin' that wicket, and he says, 'Poor thing; take her away: it's too bad to bring you into this trouble.'

So I says, 'No, sir; don't mind me, it's only my foolish ways, there 'avin' a weak mind. But,' I says, 'even't you nothin' more to tell me, as she'll be glad to hear when she's got her senses?'

He cries out, 'Ah, that is a mercy; then she's spared a great deal. I've nothing more to say; and he shook my hand once more, and I was took out of the place a sobbin' like a maniac.

It was, I should say, about twelve o'clock that very night; I was a sittin' by her a watchin', for my dear mother 'ad gone to bed, and the nurse was a layin' down, when all of a sudden I was quite took aback to see my dear missus a sittin' up in bed. I goes to her quietly, and says, 'What is it, mum?' and I see as she knowed me.

'Martha,' she says, 'I should like to get up.' I says, 'Not till mornin', mum.' She says, 'Oh! I shall not be here in the mornin'.' So I thought nat'ally as her head was a wanderin' agin; but no it wasn't, she was quite reasonable, and says to me, 'Martha, I don't want you to tell me anything, but only promise me as I shall be laid in the same grave with him.' I couldn't speak, I only nodded my 'ead, and goes close up to her and, I'm sure I don't know why I did it, but if I didn't take and put the lock of his hair in her hand. If ever I see a angel's smile it was on her dear lips as she kissed that bit of hair. I says, 'Wouldn't you like something?' She turns round and throws her arms quite quiet round my neck. She says to me, 'God, who never deserts them as trusts in him, has sent you to be my friend. I bless and thank you for all you have done. Bury us near our darling.' She says, 'When I am gone let some one write to those people: you know where I received the money from. You'll find the letter in my desk. Tell them all is over with us both, and that I forgive them.' She'd keep her arms round me all the time she was talkin', and then she said, 'Lay me down again, I want to sleep; I've 'ad such a lovely dream, and p'raps it will come again.' I put a glass of water to her lips, but she said in her own sweet way like, 'Not any, thank you.' So I laid her down, and sat by the bed-side, and she kep' a holdin' my 'and.

I wanted to call mother, for I see a great change in her, but she held my hand that tight I couldn't get away. So I sat still a watching her, and then

she turned towards me again, and I stooped my head down to listen to her. And she says, 'Martha, I'm so happy.' I said, 'I'm glad on it, mum, I'm sure.' She says, 'I've had my darlin' Clara near me all night, and I'm goin' with her: such lovely fields, so bright and sunny; and you shall come too.' I don't think as ever she spoke any more. Mother come in about six, and wanted me to go to bed. I said, 'I'll never leave her, mother; it will soon be over.' And when she come to look at her, she says, 'You're right, my dear.' I shall never forget seein' her pass away; it was wonderful, for it come as the clock was a striking eight. She'd been quiet for hours, and just then she opened her eyes and cast them up, and died with a lovely smile a lightin' up her face.

We buried them together, next the grave of their little gal; and the lawyer he was very kind, and said as he'd pay out of his own pocket if there wasn't money enough; and he told me as they had moved 'eaven and earth, as the sayin' is, for to save 'im, but it wasn't no use, for there wasn't any one to speak up for him; but, law, it does seem 'ard to cut a young man off like that for a bit of money as you're liable to lose one way if you don't another; and it's a mercy as they've been and altered them laws, as was a disgrace, not as you can blame King George, as was a sittin' on the throne, cos it was the laws.

I got that lawyer to write to them 'umbugs in Scotland, as was her own

flesh and blood, but no one near related, thro' her bein' a orphim, as a uncle 'ad brought up; but, in course, thro' marryin' like that, 'ad steeled him agin her, as was p'raps thro' 'aving a second wife, as often sets men agin their relations, but must lay 'eavy at her door; for if that young man 'ad been treated kind he'd never 'ave been drove to that as was his untimely end; and I 'ave heerd say as his mother was dead, and his father a party as 'ad deserted her, and married with a family, and a 'oldin' up his 'ead, no doubt, as I don't envy 'im now, nor yet when his last moments is a 'angin' over him.

But, law bless me! 'ow I've been a talkin', and never meant to tell you about it, only thro' your a asking me to tell you something as we was all a sitting round the fire Christmas-time cheerful, and if I 'aven't made you cry. So Brown he'd been a sleepin', he had, and says, 'Well, if you give 'em one of your cheerful stories, no wonder as they've been a snivellin', for you're a downright Newgate Calendar, you are.' I says, 'Brown, it's jest as well when we're all enjoyin' of ourselves, as we should think of them miseries as is sent to some on us, to make us feel thankful as we ain't wuss off than we are.' But, law! I've seen such a deal of life, as I considers a dreary blank, as the sayin' is; but yet feels thankful as I can enjoy myself with them I loves none the wuss for a thinkin' over the sorsers of others.

ARTHUR SKETCHLEY.





TO A PRETTY STRANGER.

[See the Poem.]

TO A PRETTY STRANGER.

I DO not know you, lady fair!
 Perhaps I never may
 (For Fate can seldom drop so rare
 A treasure in my way).
 Still Memory may take delight
 In trying to recall
 The comet of a shiny night—
 The Beauty of a Ball.

To hear the song—to see the dance
 In which you fitted by—
 To summon up that haughty glance
 Before the mental eye,—
 Such sights and sounds I shall esteem
 A privilege, though small;
 And you shall reign throughout my dream,
 The Beauty of a Ball.

You feel, I fancy, very proud;
 Or, maybe, very vain:
 You find the homage of the crowd
 A pleasant thing to gain.
 But say,—is yours a happy state?
 I cannot guess at all
 What sentiments may animate
 The Beauty of a Ball.

My lady fair! your winning ways,
 Your figure, face, and dress
 Will haunt me many, many days
 In all their loveliness.
 But should we meet—where'er it be—
 (Park, fête, or banquet hall),
 You have no name but this for me—
 'The Beauty of a Ball.'

BALLS IN VIENNA.

A FEW years ago and no European capital was less visited by our countrymen and countrywomen than Vienna. In the days of Metternich despotisms, *malice prepense* aggravated the inevitable pains of locomotion with a machinery well calculated to keep the Austrian frontiers clear of mere holiday travellers. So that in the days of passports and police, few strangers came to the Imperial city except on business. Vienna contained, it is true, a colony of respectable English, who had settled on the banks of the Danube for purposes of economy or pleasure. But since paper money has driven away the metallic coinage, low prices have taken to themselves wings, so that Vienna is at present the dearest of European cities, except St. Petersburg, for any one who cannot renounce home luxuries and comforts. Since, too, those Magyar grandees, whose brilliant genial hospitality gave Vienna her ancient social reputation, have, in consequence of political enmities, completely disappeared from the scene, the Tustige Wien has lost most of her traditional attractions in this kind. Then the remnant of society which still survives cleaves more closely than ever to the surprising machinery of the exclusive system, and shows, besides, a Chinese dislike of strangers. Thus the upper ten thousand—or, to speak by the card, the upper three hundred—are practically unapproachable by foreign interlopers who do not possess the open sesame of exceptional privilege. Hence no one now comes to Vienna either to save money or to disport himself in gilded saloons. On the other hand, despite the want of proper hotel accommodation at certain periods of the spring and autumn, the Graben and the Prater are almost as full of strangers as the Corso at Easter, or the Cascine at Whitsuntide. Then comes the British tourist, armed with the crimson strabo of Albemarle Street, which at once marks him out as a proper subject for imposture and extortion decorated with the

favourite apparatus of straps, pouches, and other articles of ornamental sadlery, accompanied by a female train, whose rosy cheeks and rainbow toilettes excite the wonder of all the population. For energy and rapidity of performance he stands alone. He and his shove their way through the Kohlmarkt without apologising to the astonished persons for the thumps and pushes inflicted on the slow, courteous Austrians. They rattle through the Stefan's kirche, almost knocking down the acolytes, and drowning the litanies with their jabber. They rush into the vaults of the church of the Capucines, and, rattling their umbrellas on the silver coffins of twenty fossil Hapsburgs, chaff the guardians of these venerable relics of K. K. greatness, about the pleats of the historic Austrian lip. Then plunging into the depths of the Belvedere, they remark the vulgarity of Titian's Ecce Homo in comparison with Mr. Olman Unt's Light of the World, and the bad drawing of the acromion process in Rubens' snarling crocodile—that miserable Exaliosaurian so completely eclipsed by Turner's Dragon of the Hesperides.

Looking to the point of national pride, we may rejoice that the British tourist does not come to close quarters with the aristocracy of Austria. And yet if the contact could be, advantage would result to both sides; for as our country people might pick up manners, so the Austrians might pick up ideas. However, the business which specially concerns us here, is transacted in Vienna with a high degree of intelligence, and in this department of human excellence the English come in with the ruck of the European race. The Ball, as an institution, seems to be a distinguishing mark of the modern civilisation of the west. According to oriental notions the gasping and agitated movements of the dance degrade the dignity of the human person, and may not be publicly exhibited except by a professional

class. A like notion prevailed in the Greek and Hebrew world. Turkish diplomacy has made concessions to European habits, so that the representatives of the Sublime Porte are permitted to give balls, and the younger Ottomans are sometimes tempted to indulge in a furtive waltz. But; as a rule, decent Easterns may not trip it on the light fantastic toe. In this respect, we of the west have surely chosen the wiser course. For, barring the incidental objection attaching to late hours, which are no necessary part of Terpsichore's practice, the ball is the most reasonable of social entertainments. Now that conversation has lost its salt, and that society is nothing but a hustling, hurrying crowd, it is better to go where music, dancing, truffles, and champagne await us, than to stiff gatherings of what Byron calls

‘the polished hordes

Formed of two mighty tribes, the bora and bora.’

For women balls may sometimes be full of disappointment and disgust, but they are the paradise of men. At balls the fair sex put on their best charms of manner, their finest attire, their most massive chignons, and, in a word, open all the batteries of female seduction. The general radiance of feeling and behaviour is diffused, even over those who do not partake in the special business of the night. Under such circumstances gossip forgets some of his twaddle, stiffness loses something of her starch, flirtation becomes a more spontaneous and more gushing flood. Especially is this the case amongst the Cephalopodous Viennese, whose brains seem to be located in their heels. There are striking spectacles of the ball sort to be seen in Vienna. The annual Gala Ball given at the Hofburg, and the public Bürger, or Citizens' Ball at the Redouten Saal are of matchless splendour and outer interest. The social code of Austria, which is no less severe than the laws of the Medes and Persians, does not permit the close contact of plebeians with the nobility and K. K. Court. Sixteen quarterings on the shield, in other words, a double current of

blue blood, at least eight generations, or a pedigree two hundred years long, are the warrant for admission to good society and the presence of the Imperial House. However, into the annual ball, even such profane vulgar as Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Foreign Ambassadors, and the like, are usually smuggled; so that the company present on these occasions swells in dimension and degrades in gentility to the English and French standards. The Burg is a plain, rambling palace of the barrack class, with staircases and approaches of analogous style, and devoid of positive decoration except carpets and whitewash. On a ball night the main streets of Vienna are choked by files of carriages and fiacres streaming up from every region of the city to the Franzens platz of the Burg. The entrance gained, an almost equally endless line of corridors, guarded by Heydricks in the livery of the double eagle, leads to the first of a snaky series of apartments, which must be traversed before the Ritter Saal, or great hall of ceremony can be reached. The Saal is of spacious and lofty proportions encircled by a range of Corinthian columns, with an orchestral tribune at the extreme end, the whole construction being lined with white scagliola, and lighted from rows of burners set along the entablature below the ceiling. The company is arranged in horseshoe shape to await the coming of the Court. Down the sides of the Saal are benches rising in an amphitheatre fashion, and occupied by the ladies of the aristocracy, to whom, according to their respective rank, specific places are assigned. Below them stand the gentlemen of the Court, nobles, Hofraths, and other official staff, great military personages, and the officers of the regiments in garrison, besides strangers from the adjacent provinces of the empire; the curve of the horseshoe is formed by the foreign diplomatic body, the ambassadors with their respective suites standing just beneath the tribune, the ambassadors' wives and other official ladies, or female visitors of distinction, being close at

hand. While the company gathers a hum of muffled conversation is heard; but the gaiety proper to the opening of a ball is chilled to the icy tone prescribed by palatial etiquette. At length something agitates the distant margin of the sea of heads; a way is cut through the close crowd as suddenly as if a battery of guns had opened fire upon its mass; a cloud of chamberlains, thrown out as skirmishers in advance, widen the lane into a road by civil entreaties, sugary threats, and the gentle pressure of their wands of office. The Imperial cortège advances in closer order, a blazing column of coloured uniforms embroidered with silver and gold, led by their Imperial Majesties in person. The company express their loyalty by profound obeisances, which are graciously acknowledged by the K. K. pair, who tread slowly and solemnly up the Saal, followed by their glittering retinue, till the ranks of the foreign ambassadors are reached. Here the Emperor falls off to greet the gentlemen of the diplomatic body, the Empress in like manner moving towards the female representatives of foreign countries. His majesty shakes hands with the ambassador who has been longest resident at his court, makes a few inquiries about the health of the royalty at home, with whom his excellency is assumed to be in close correspondence, and then pauses in order to allow the presentation of persons of the ambassadorial suite. Having asked every such individual whether his sojourn in Vienna pleases him—a question usually answered with a strong affirmative—his majesty proceeds to the latitude of the ambassador next in order, and repeats the same exciting ceremony. Afterwards he approaches the ministers-plenipotentiary, and then, with that grace of manner which is his most marked characteristic, addresses a few words of recognition to the gentlemen who have already had the honour of making his Imperial acquaintance. Royal memories, generally so empty of things, are usually guided by instincts in respect to persons, which seem little less than miraculous for accuracy and extent.

During this time the Empress gratifies, first the foreign ladies, then the foreign gentlemen, with a like exchange of compliments. As she advances with the tread which Virgil attributes to the queen of the gods, her face and figure full of commanding majesty and smiling grace, bowing to right and left with swan-like elegance of motion, a suppressed murmur of admiration runs through the great assembly. A few clouds of tulle, fastened with jewels that might furnish an empire's ransom, a nosegay of camellias mixed with hanging brilliants, an India of rubies and diamonds blazing through a coronet of lustrous brown hair—such are the adornments of this paragon of imperial creatures, the most beautiful of a beautiful Bavarian race. A soft, yet sorrowful voice, which addresses every stranger in his own language with rare purity of accent, intonation, and happy choice of words, completes the charms of this enchanting and right royal ravishment. When the formalities of presentation compliment are concluded, their majesties pass to the ranks of the domestic guests, where, however, they make but a short stay. This interlude finished, the orchestra strikes up, a space is cleared in front, and the Empress, accompanied by the archduchesses present, and the several ambassadors, takes her place on a sofa to see the dancing. On these occasions, whether from the fear of doing irreparable damage to priceless tunics and flounces of Cluny and Valenciennes, or from the presence of that formidable army of unknown lookers-on, which gives the ball the publicity of a ballet, there is an absence of the *brio* proper to private assemblies, and a reluctance to step into the magic circle. The whole scene almost surpasses the splendours of operatic pageantry. No uniforms are so brilliant at night as those of Austria, nowhere else is there a finer flaunting of silks, brocades, and satins, nor a more glittering display of pearls, emeralds, and diamonds. There is not much beauty of a striking sort amongst the Austrian ladies, but their forms are well grown, and the younger people

present the true type of aristocratic distinction, both in manners and appearance. Heaven generally bestows compensations on its creatures, and the Austrians, so empty of brains and knowledge, excel in dancing. The elder people pretend that the adoption of steel petticoats and trailing skirts has caused a visible decline in the skilled practice of this delightful art, but a stranger is more likely to wonder at the perfection of the present than to sigh for the refinements of the past. Dancing, like singing, cannot be properly cultivated in narrow and crowded rooms, so that our own degraded style of execution may well be pardoned. Englishmen have rarely enough ear for music to recognize the difference of rhythm that separates the polka from the waltz, although they can sometimes detect, empirically, the jingle of a familiar tune. In Vienna it never happens that a dancing Dundreary, after listening without result to an orchestral strain, is driven to inquire the nature of the dance about to be performed. The Viennese are not addicted to music of a high class, but their hearing is of the keenest, both for melody and time, whenever their perceptions are spurred by the stimulus of dancing. Jean Paul said every Englishman was an island, and in like manner it may be said that every Englishman, and every Englishwoman too, have their own way of dancing. Some dancers have no ear at all, the majority step without precision, one has a snaky slide, another a sparrowy hop, one likes a solemn andante, another a wriggling presto; this confident damsel clings close to her partner, that bashful virgin struggles as she moves to evade the impropriety of a too close embrace. Under such anarchical circumstances there is no chance for the development of a refined and congruous style of art. Then, as the education of the heels hardly satisfies the requirements of an English social career, our youth are too disposed to neglect this, the only vital branch of Austrian schooling. Thus it will be easily understood that Austrians dance with an elegance and ease which, amongst ourselves, has no existence at all.

The Emperor does not permit his guests to remain too late, so that before the stroke of midnight, gold stick, advancing to the imperial sofa, invites the imperial and diplomatic personages to come to tea. The Empress leading the van, the ladies whose rank gives them this exalted privilege follow her majesty across the Saal, through several corridors and apartments to the room specially prepared for the royal company. Her majesty takes her seat at a table with an ambassadress on one hand and an archduchess on the other, taking care that their tea is properly seasoned with sugar and milk. The gentlemen crowd into the room, and all eyes are directed to the beautiful hostess. Perhaps nothing but the habit of the stage can steel a woman to ordeals like this, which, if flattering to vanity, are terrible encounters even for the toughest nerves. No other sovereign in the bloom of youth and loveliness commands a larger stock of self-possession than the Austrian empress; but even she, on given occasions, seems to shrink from the admiration of her lieges with the conscious modesty of a woman who finds herself the cynosure of a thousand ardent eyes. At length the scene of trial closes, and the company return to the Saal to witness the final cotillon. Meanwhile, tables are spread throughout the adjoining rooms with tea, coffee, ices, jellies, preserves, cakes, and other light refreshments. Solid supper is not given, but champagne and punch flow in rivers on every side, and the imperial funkeys distribute bonbons that transcend the choicest morsels of Boissier or Zouache. These luscious treasures are wrapped not in mere shreds of tinsel, but in artistic photographs of the members of the imperial family. Thus while the Austrian mouth is satiated with sugar, the Austrian mind is stimulated with loyal sentiment. At length the cotillon ends, the imperial pair retires, the company crowds the steps, and soon after midnight the last carriage rolls away from the entrance of the Burg.

Few private balls are given in the best Vienna circles; but some of

those which do occur may be taken as models of sumptuous and refined hospitality. For the Austrians, who, in respect of every other species of social entertainment, are a churlish and close-fisted people, when a ball is on the tapis forget their parsimony and open their purses wide.

In Vienna there are two private palaces justly famous for their balls. The town houses of the English aristocracy sometimes possess handsome apartments, but special ball-rooms are almost, if not quite, unknown. Paris and Petersburg can show many opulent and imposing mansions. For magnificence of internal plan and decoration the palaces of Rome are unapproached, and in many of them thought has been taken for great festive occasions. All these cities do honour to Terpsichore; and the Roman entertainments, in particular, are calculated to make a strong impression on æsthetic minds on account of the architectural beauty, the tapestries, the statues, the paintings, the superb proportions of the rooms where they are held. But the mere business of dancing is better transacted at Vienna. All the arrangements and appliances are well adapted to the one great end. The entrance-hall, the corridors, the main staircase, are lined with an army of liveried lackeys; and a long series of chambers, easy of approach and egress, lead to the ball-room, which is provided with several outlets, so as to prevent the circulation being stopped. The ball-room is spacious, lofty, faced with scagliola ornaments, imitated from good models of Rococo decoration, lighted with exceeding brilliancy by lustres of Vienna manufacture, which, as their framework is of wood, are able to be constructed of unusually massive proportions. The music is matchless, and consists either of executants from the orchestra of Stranes, or of a select military band. Strauss stands at the head of his art, and the Austrian bands seem scarcely to belong to the same instrumental category as those of England and France. The military music of Austria is a slave rather than a German institution,

for the greater part of the performers are either Czechs, Hungarians, or Hungarian slaves. The bandsmen play with equal facility on wind and stringed instruments; and nothing can surpass their splendour of tone, their elaboration of finish in execution, the certainty and solidity of their *ensemble*. Lovers of music can never tire at an Austrian ball, and the most bigoted purist will find beauty of melody and treatment in the compositions performed. The mere operation of dancing is kept up till morning with great vigour, but other sorts of amusement do not prosper. Flirtation, in particular, does not seem to flourish on Austrian aristocratic soil. There are no tender couples sitting apart in cozy corners; no naughty princesses listening to declarations till their chaste cheeks blush with happiness or fear; no gay deceivers, entreating for surreptitious gloves, kisses, and locks of hair. That Austrian folly never grows romantic, that there exists no current of subterranean sentiment, it would be rash to assert. But it may safely be said that outer demonstrations of such a sort are very rarely witnessed, and that the scandalous chronicle is very seldom invoked. Like other women, those of Vienna are asked and given in marriage, nor can it be supposed that an Austrian wedding is an invariable guarantee of matronly virtue. Still such business is transacted *sub rosa*, and flirtation, whether as a preliminary or a pastime, is not cultivated or comprehended in its artistic forms. Flirtation, after all, is a science that demands for its exercise a certain amount of intellectual resource, and the mildest minimum of thought is too heavy a tax on the Vienna brain. However, other intellectual compensations exist. The 'provant' department is administered with a completeness which would give Captain Dalgetty his heart's desire. After the first cotillon is ended, generally between two and three in the morning, supper is announced. A dancing archduke leads in the lady of the house, the other dancers follow with their partners; *durchlants* and other

dignitaries take a road and room apart.

The Austrians are large eaters, but quantity, not quality, is their test of culinary excellence. However, good cooks are to be found in Vienna at low wages by any one who takes the precaution of closing with a Czech or Hungarian artist; for Germans, as a race, are incapable of mastering the inner refinements of the culinary science. The cooks of Vienna excel in sweet dishes, and women who cannot brew a *potage Colbert* or *Bisque* will nevertheless turn out faultless *meringues*.

It is hard to get a good dinner at any of the hotels or *traiteurs* of Vienna. A small restaurant is attached to the casino, or aristocratic club, in the *Herrngasse*. Here the viands and wine, if falling far below the Parisian standard, though rather above the Parisian prices, are at least tolerable. The Austrians do not much indulge in dinner hospitality, so that the rising generation, which does not travel and does not study Brillat-Savarin, has no fair chance of educating its palate. At balls the greatest exertions are made, and the guests may always sup, if not wisely, at least well. This important meal cannot, of course, be taken standing by people of strict gastronomic principles. As the great object of Amphitryons and artists alike is to assimilate their suppers to those of Paris, to describe the savoury mountains under which the tables groan would be to re-edit the best pages of Fracastelli and Uda. Perhaps the pride of Austrian larders is the Bohemian pheasant, a bird of fatter and more luscious flesh than his British cousin. The capercaillie, or *anerhahn* (*Tetrao urogallus*), is a fowl of splendid personal appearance, but indifferent culinary qualities. The capercaillie is to the grouse what the aurochs is to the race of domestic cattle, and from his size and eccentric habits he is much sought after by Austrian sportsmen. He must be caught in the act of whistling to his frau gräfin, in which pastime he only indulges at night. Then the sportsman, advancing with diplomatic precaution till the bird's form is

seen in relief against the sky, kills this parent of our grouse as he sits perched on his bough anticipatory not of death but of flirtation. This may appear a poaching procedure, but the case of the wild swine in Austria is sadder still. In the imperial beast-garden, near Vienna, for instance, *sus ferox* roams about munching acorns, and keeping company with the K. K. deer, for the out-door species of Austrian hog is a sociable creature. Huts are erected at the points where the forest paths and glades intersect each other; and on the occasion of a grand battue Imperial Majesty, and as many of the eighteen archdukes as may be available, take their stations in the aforesaid huts. The peaceable and reluctant wild swine being then driven past in battalions, are satisfactorily slaughtered by breech-loaders till the vindictive humours of the ruler's soul have passed. Poor Austrian out-door hog! It is said that from motives of economy his beast-garden at Hutteldorf and elsewhere will be dismantled, so that he will presumably be free to roam about the face of the empire. But hogs and capercaillies should only concern us in respect of their esculant properties.

Amongst the specialities of Austrian dancing-life should be mentioned the balls given in the many assembly rooms of the city. In addition to the so-called 'pic-nics' of the aristocracy, a sort of Austrian Almack's, there are public balls got up by and for specific classes of the population. For instance, the students, the tourists, the artists, the burghers, each of these classes has its separate ball. The artists' ball is the most interesting, as the celebrities of the *corps de ballet* appear and dance in the costume of ordinary life, arrayed, too, with a richness of silks, satins, and laces that cannot be surpassed by the most expensive efforts of aristocratic crinoline. The *bürger ball* is held in the Redouben Saal, an assembly-room belonging to the apartments of the Burg, and let out by the competent K. K. Beamten to individuals or committees. The great room is surrounded by a con-

tinuous gallery, from which the ladies of the aristocracy, who could not degrade themselves by contact with the dancers, watch the proceedings of the middle classes at the *bürger ball*. This ball offers an admirable bird's-eye view of the class in question. A stranger who visits it on two or three consecutive occasions will probably come to the conclusion that the amalgamation of the Austrian aristocracy and middle class will not be achieved until the latter make more show than they do at present of copying the outward appearance and manners of the

former. It is hardly conceivable that anything short of a convulsion would throw the two orbits into one. However repugnant Austrian practice in this respect may be to English notions, it is doubtful if our ways would suit the banks of the Danube. While the nobles decline to stoop, the middle class does not much desire to climb. Far from the faults of the social strata being a source of bitterness to those below, they are accepted as harmless, if not useful, interruptions of a continuity which no one desires to establish.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A BACHELOR.

By JACK EASEL.

TO be twenty years of age, with a sound digestion, a light heart, and a latch-key, seems to me, in certain moods, the *summum bonum* of earthly enjoyment. I am not going to remark that a man at that time of life is cleverer, or more virtuous, or a more profitable member of society than when his beard begins to grizzle. I only say he is happier: that he has probably never been so happy before, and that he certainly will never be so again. The jollity of schoolboys is, I fancy, over-rated. We look back upon that so-called golden period of early youth through a pleasant but deceptive halo, which makes us forget the alloy of discomforts which it contained. In the old Greek epigram, a certain hero hails with reverence both Mnemosyne and Lethe in one breath. 'Let me,' cries he, 'remember all the good I have done, and forget my errors.' And, after this fashion, we indulge in a retrospect of cricket and round jackets. We call to mind the delights of 'breaking-up day,' our unimpaired appetite for pastry, the glow of pleasure with which we received our prizes (you may guess how many fall to my share), but we forget the miseries we endured; the horrors of *Propria quæ maribus* and *Pons asinorum*; the fussy plati-

tudes of that old pedagogue in a trencher cap; the brutal conduct of the young sixth-form tyrant for whom we had the honour of fagging; the depressing chill of early 'chapters;' the cruel scars which were left upon—: no; not even if Mr. Gunter himself were to offer me the whole contents of his shop, bride-cakes and all; not if I might be captain of the school eleven; not if I could read 'Euripides' as easily as the 'Times' newspaper; not for the rosiest cheeks in the world, the most generous 'tips' that could be hoped for,—nay, not to be that model of scholastic perfection, Mr. Thomas Brown himself,—would I go back to fifteen again!

But to call oneself *man* for the first time; to wield the razor with a consciousness of real necessity (boys used to shave in 184—); to live in lodgings or chambers on one's own account,—go out or come home when one likes; to enter upon life with a keen zest for life's enjoyments, with health, spirits, hope, and a tolerably easy conscience—ah! that is the true golden age; those are the rosy hours when, taking old Father Time kindly by the hand, setting his scythe and hour-glass in the chimney-corner, and passing the loving-cup across the table to him, most of us would

cry, 'Here, venerable sire, here let us linger!'

I believe a common protest is raised from time to time, by old fogeys, that young men in this country are not what they used to be; and, upon my word, though I disregarded the notion a dozen years ago, I begin to have some faith in it now. One faculty, at least, they seem to be losing—the faculty of enjoyment.

Look at Young England in a ball-room, at the theatre, or during a picnic. Does he look happy, amused, or *impulsed* in any way? or is he a mere listless young dandy, *blasé*, and bored—or affecting to be so—with everything and everybody around him? I vow there are some young gentlemen of this description whom I never see without feeling a strong desire to slap them heartily between the shoulders (can't you imagine their horror at such a greeting?), and ask what on earth they think worth caring for. Early in the last *decennium*, we young fellows, whose whiskers were just beginning to bud, not only enjoyed life, but didn't mind showing that we enjoyed it. Our tastes were none of the most intellectual, I am afraid. We courted the muses after a rough and ready fashion—over pipes of bird's-eye and tankards of pale ale. There weren't so many novels to read then as there are now; but somehow I fancy they had better stuff in them. I know we looked forward every month to the appearance of Mr. Thackeray's two yellow leaves, and Mr. Dickens's two green leaves, with a zest which is unknown to the rising generation. There was not a chapter in 'David Copperfield' that we didn't discuss, laughing at Peggotty and Mr. Micawber, indignant with Uriah Heep, pitying poor little Dora, and deeply touched by the fate of handsome, reckless, proud, misguided Sturforth. Pendency we voted somewhat of a prig; but his friend, George Warrington—was not that a character to study, to admire, and emulate? I believe when the great satirist of our day, in his profound world-wisdom, sketched that life-like portrait, half the interest with

which he invested it was due to the fact that he was unconsciously describing himself. Only a few of us had kept up our Latin; and Raikesmere, of the State Sinecures Office (who went up from Westminster to Oxford, but left that university, for reasons which need not here be named, without taking his degree), was mighty apt with his quotations from Horace when we met at the Cimbrian Stores to dine, or sat gossiping round some third-floor fireplace in the Temple. 'Nunc est bibendum' he used to cry, blowing off the froth from his pewter; and most of the young artists who heard him, not having themselves had the advantage, as the phrase is, of a classical education, regarded that thriftless reprobate as a miracle of wit and learning. But when we came to talk of books in our own mother-tongue—of English poets, from Chaucer down to Mr. Tennyson—my goodness, what a chattering there was! what a fierce puffing of three-penny cheroots! what an outpour of earnest, frank, and beer-inspired arguments!

The Cimbrian Stores was an old-fashioned tavern, where an eighteenpenny ordinary was held at six o'clock. The bitter ale (and a very decent tap too) came to fourpence, and one gave twopence more to the waiter, which, you see, exactly made up the two shillings—a modest but sufficient item in our daily expenses. I've had worse dinners in my time, I can tell you. They gave us soup or fish, a cut off the roast, vegetables, and a famous piece of Cheddar cheese. There was wine at a moderate tariff for those who liked it. Mr. Vokins, the respected landlord, took the chair precisely as the quaint old mahogany-cased clock in the corner struck the hour, and, rapping the table with his carving-knife, said a brief but impressive grace. It was a snug and cosy little set that gathered round that table. A few middle-aged personal friends of Mr. V. sat right and left of him. On the subject of their respective professions I was then, and am still, completely in the dark. They en-

tered the room just five minutes before dinner-time, and fell half asleep over their grog, when we youngsters went back to our books and drawing-boards, or oftener, if my memory doesn't deceive me, to the pit of some theatre, especially in the winter season, when we made a point of visiting all the pantomimes.

I am thankful to say that I have not yet lost my relish for pantomimes. Burlesques, I admit, bore me horribly. It wasn't with dear Planché's inventions. His wit was elegant and scholar-like; his jokes, if not profound, had a genuine sparkle about them quite independent of the mere *double entendre*; the stories which he chose for illustration were admirably adapted for his purpose. You didn't want a breakdown nigger dance, or an infant prodigy, or an optical illusion to set them off. The days of Vestris, the days of Harley, of Mdles. St. George, Reynolds, and Horton,—that was the golden age of burlesque writing and burlesque acting. Those artists played their parts as if they enjoyed the fun themselves. Your modern actors and actresses seem only to condescend to theirs. They enunciate those wretched little milk-and-water puns as if they were ashamed of them—and well they may be, for, as a rule, weaker balderdash has never passed for wit. Jokes indeed! why you might make a gross of them in an hour. They are not jokes—they are not even puns—but a silly jingle of sounds. The audience don't laugh at this stuff: they can't. I defy any one with a grain of sense to do so. They only utter a dismal groan, which runs round the dress-circle like a banshee's wail.

But a pantomime, a real, genuine, well-organized pantomime, with a regular transformation-scene and plenty of harlequinade, is a national institution which I trust may never become extinct. It is not an intellectual amusement, perhaps; to enjoy it you need be familiar neither with politics nor the pages of Dr. Lemprière's dictionary. It is simple nonsense, if you will—but then it pretends to be nothing else. We

can't always (thank goodness) combine instruction with amusement, like the amiable pedagogues who invent geographical games, and playfully beguile little boys into the rule of three. No; a pantomime is solely intended to make us laugh, and the man who refuses to laugh at it once a year, and in the presence of children, must be a gloomy misanthrope. For my part I confess to no little sympathy with Mr. Merryman in his various escapades. I like to see him purloining sausages, geese, and legs of mutton, and admire the adroitness with which he transfers those comestibles to his capacious pocket. I am pleased when he divides the fish with Pantaloon, and, with a great semblance of fairness, reserves by far the larger share for himself. I rejoice when he is fired out of a cannon or pressed flat in a mangle, because I know by experience that his constitution can stand these trials, and that ten to one he will be livelier for them in the next scene. As for Columbine, I have always regarded her as one of the most fascinating women in Christendom, and could desire no better fate than to go through life with such a partner, pirouetting up and down the world dressed in a tight suit of spangles, like that lucky dog Harlequin, who can leap into a clock-face, or disappear through a shop-shutter as quick as lightning—whenever it suits his convenience.

A halo of intense respect surrounds the memory of those old Gimbriams as I picture them to myself, seated on sturdy Windsor chairs, in that homely but hospitable parlour panelled high with English oak, and bearing on its walls fair copies of the Lely portraits at Hampton Court. They were very strong in politics—those stout and ancient Britons—a subject which, judging from my own experience, interests the art-student but very little. So we let them say their say, and wag their venerable old heads with solemn earnestness, as they discussed the merits of Sir Robert Peel, and entered at length upon the great Chartist question.

As for *nous autres*, we kept our conversation pretty much to our-

selves. Sometimes a dozen of us, painters, sucking barristers, government-office clerks, and a medical student or two, would form a little conclave at one end of the table, and, content for once to spend a quiet evening, would sit on, gossiping, long after the old *habitudes* of the place (the *extra-ordinaries*, as we used to call them, in playful allusion to the nature of the banquet) had toddled home. It was at one o'clock, I think, when Robert, the head waiter, used to come in, rubbing his eyes, with a 'Now gentlemen, if you please!' the usual form of warning which he gave us previously to turning off the gas. I fear a good deal of what military men call 'pipeclay,' and civilians 'shop,' was talked on all sides, and the artists had the best of it. It will, I believe, be admitted that the failing is natural to us as a class. Scarcely any other calling can be said to furnish a theme for work and play to the same devotees. When Mugwell, the rising young lawyer, goes off to Switzerland for the long vacation, do you suppose he troubles his head with Blackstone on the Wengern Alp, or pops a brief into his pocket before stepping on board the boat at Lucerne? You might travel all day with those eminent medical celebrities, Dr. Pillington and Mr. Lancelot Probus, and never find out that one gentleman obtained a livelihood by writing hieroglyphics at a guinea a page, and that the other would be ready at any moment to cut you up—not metaphorically, but in the flesh—with-out the slightest remorse? I have known even sober and unimpeachable divines modify their costume to no small extent as soon as they have crossed the Channel, exchange the conventional white choker for an easy silk neckerchief, replace the stern chimney-pot with a comfortable wideawake, and wear an ordinary shooting-coat instead of the more orthodox paleot. Barring a slight tendency to intone his conversation, you would hardly recognize his reverence in the frank and genial talker who sits next you at the table d'hôte. If our young clergy have their little failings they

certainly do not intrude ecclesiastical intelligence upon you between the wine and walnuts, that is, unless you begin the subject. But what does an artist like to talk about so much as his art? How delighted he is sure to be if, agreeing with the theories which he propounds, you endorse his opinion that Madder Brown is a great genius! With what mingled pity and contempt he will regard you if you happen to admire the landscapes of Stippler! 'What, my dear fellow, *that* man's work like nature? Nonsense! I tell you there isn't a bit of nature in it! It's the feeblest, most commonplace stuff you ever saw! I don't suppose he ever drew anything but a cork correctly in all his life! Colour, indeed! the fellow's got no sense of colour in him. That foreground of his thing last year—hang on the line too, by Jove!—was nothing but a sheer piece of cabbage from Fogley's picture, and as for his greens—' &c., &c.

The artist-diners at the Cimbrian Stores outnumbered all the others put together. Law and medicine held their own sometimes; and when the gossip turned on general literature, we met on common ground. But art was the favourite subject of conversation, or 'jaw,' in the polite language of the Cimbrians. Our occasional visitors, perhaps, found it a little too much of a good thing sometimes, but most of them were very good-tempered on this point, and listened in meek astonishment to the astounding expressions of sentiment which came pouring forth from our lips in a fragrant cloud of tobacco. Once, and once only, was there any marked or offensive allusion to this habit, when that muff, Raikemere, would insist on bringing his friend, young Tinfleigh Hunter, also of the S-nec-re Office, to dine with us. The idiot came in evening dress, with a jewelled shirt-front, and looked round upon our tweed coats and hairy faces with a mixed look of surprise and contempt. We were civil enough to him at first, but he scarcely deigned to speak to one of us, and, winking at Raikemere after dinner (he had been

(drinking pretty freely), remarked that there was a d—d smell of paint in the room. I don't think any one of us would have seen the allusion, but that the fool began to chuckle (as fools will) when he had uttered this splendid piece of witticism.

I was sitting just opposite him, and my old schoolfellow, Dick Dewberry, of the Middle Temple, was by my side. Dick had been at Oxford with Tuffleigh, and knew his line. Moreover, Dick was an amateur painter of no inconsiderable merit, and had a fellow-feeling for our cause.

'I beg your pardon, sir,' cries Mr. Dewberry, very stiffly, across the table; 'I think you said that——'

'That there was a smell of paint. Yes, I did,' says the grinning dandy; 'perhaps you don't object to it?'

'To which, sir, the paint or your remark?' asks Dick, pretty smartly.

Raikesmere turned crimson.

'Pon my life I don't know,' drawled Hunter. 'You seem to take offence. Are you a painter?'

'Why, no, sir, but I'm a gentleman,' cries Dick, lighting his cigar; 'and a few of my friends here are both.'

'Then I s'pose you're accustomed to paint,' sneers Hunter, unabashed.

Raikesmere was nudging his elbow, and telling him to shut up.

'Perhaps so,' retorts Dick; 'but there are some things we are *not* accustomed to, and don't mean to endure. Raikesmere, if your friend wants the fresh air, there's plenty of it down stairs in the street.'

Tuffleigh, pouring out another glass of wine, muttered something about a public room being public property, and that he'd be blanked before he moved to oblige anybody. He was getting rapidly drunk. Dewberry rang the bell.

'Robert,' said he, when the waiter made his appearance, 'is the billiard-room engaged?'

'Not a soul but the marker in it, sir,' says old Bob.

'Very well. Then what do you say to a game of pool, gentlemen?'

We all started up, glad of the opportunity to avoid a row, and left this uncivillest of civil servants alone with his friend. Raikesmere

came after us with an ample apology, but it was the last time he ventured to bring one of his dandiacal acquaintances to dine with us.

'Confounded puppy!' growled Dewberry, when he had got back to his chambers; 'I wish I had punched his head. I would if he could have stood up and taken care of himself. There's no love lost between us, I promise you.'

'Ever seen him before?' I asked, for I felt sure there was some old grudge rankling in Mr. Dewberry's bosom.

'Well, yes, I have,' said Dick, somewhat mysteriously. 'He was pointed out to me at the Crystal Palace last Thursday.'

'By whom?' said I.

Mr. Dewberry blushed a little, and, in reply, asked me whether I could keep a secret.

'To be sure, especially when a lady is in the case,' I said, for the honest fellow had turned as red as a peony, and I saw at once that we were on delicate ground.

'The fact is, Jack,' continued D. D., 'that that fellow has been annoying a very great friend of mine for some time past, and in such a way that it would be very awkward, and, in fact, almost impossible for her—you're right, it is a lady—or for me, on her behalf, to take any notice of it.'

I now ventured to ask for a full explanation, having in the meantime mixed myself a glass of toddy, at Mr. Dewberry's express desire.

'You must know, then,' said Dick, after a pull at his own tumbler, 'that I have some friends living at Kensington, not far from where this fellow, Hunter, lives. In fact, they attend the same church of St. Didymus. Their pew is in one of the aisles, and he generally manages to get a seat close by. Well, fancy, for some weeks past the horrid snob has been in the habit of staring in an impudent manner every Sunday during service at this lady, who is very young, you know, Jack, and—ahem!—really very pretty; and she hasn't any father or brother, by the way—yes, by Jove! in such a manner as really to annoy her very much, and she

has tried to frown him down, but he won't be frowned down, and keeps on staring worse than ever. Now isn't it a disgusting shame, and don't you think it ought to be put a stop to in some way or another?"

'Most decidedly,' said I. 'Couldn't you call him to account yourself, or send a message by Raikesmere?"

'Why, no,' cries Dick; 'that's just the rub. I'd do that directly if I might, but Miss Petworth won't let me; and when one comes to think of it, you know, Jack, it would be rather awkward to mix a lady's name up with such an affair at all; because, of course, he'd deny that he meant to be rude, and say it was an accident, or something of that kind, and so get off without receiving his deserts. I want to teach him a lesson which he shan't forget in a hurry.'

'Well, what do you propose?' I asked.

'Why,' continued Mr. Dewberry, 'I've been thinking the matter over lately, and I see only one way of tackling it. It appears that Mr. Hunter's rudeness is not confined to one object. He has annoyed other ladies in the same way. Now I don't like the notion of anonymous letters, but really in a case of this kind I think the end would justify the means. He seems to be such a donkey, that I really think if he received a letter written in a woman's hand he would believe it came from one of those ladies whom he is always ogling, and then we could make as much fun of him as we chose.'

'I confess I don't exactly see how,' said I.

'Why, you old stupid,' cries Dick, 'don't you see that a man of this kind would be vain enough to keep any appointment anywhere, from the top of the monument to the bottom of the Thames Tunnel, in the fond belief that a lady had fallen in love with him, if he thought he was going to meet her. Supposing the rendezvous chosen was the Temple Gardens——'

'And you prepared with a tremendous horsewhip, I suppose,' said I.

'Why, no,' retorts Mr. Dewberry,

'that wouldn't be exactly fair—to inveigle a man, cad as he is, into a quiet place, and then lick him at one's leisure. No; I'm not going to do that. But there's nothing in the world to prevent his becoming a fund of amusement to us as he struts about waiting for his imaginary Dulcinea, while we are quietly watching and laughing at him from these windows.'

'Capital notion, upon my word,' observes Mr. Dewberry's humble servant. 'But it's easier said than done. Mr. Hunter mayn't be quite such a fool as he looks.'

'We can but try,' answers D. D. 'Suppose we put out a bait to begin with. We might sketch out a preliminary note, asking him to give evidence of the sincerity of his affection in some sign which I should be able to recognize.'

'And when are these documents to be drawn up?' I asked.

'There is no time,' said Mr. Dewberry, fetching an inkstand from a side table, 'like the present.'

Down we sat accordingly, and in the course of half an hour the following billet was indited in a delicate female hand, on a sheet of superfine Bath post.

'SIR,—The experience which a nature such as *yours* must ere this have derived from a contemplation of the confiding impulses to which a woman's heart is occasionally subject may, I *trust*, be deemed some excuse for the exceptional character of this communication. It were impossible for me to witness *week after week* the *flattering*, because *unsolicited*, attention with which you regard the writer of these lines without becoming aware that you take an interest in her welfare which has not been—may I say—altogether *unappreciated*? Should my *suspicions*—I had nearly written my *hopes*—be not without foundation, will you kindly oblige me by wearing a pea-green tie (my favourite colour) round your neck on Sunday next? After seeing it I shall feel free to tell you *more*.

'Till then I remain,

'Your unknown friend,

'BELINDA.

'P.S. Isn't Belinda a pretty name? I'm afraid you won't think mine half so pretty *when you know it!*'

'By Jove I don't think he would if he *did* know it,' says Dick, laughing. 'Capital note upon my word, in the best style of a Complete Letter-writer, with plenty of underlining. If he believes *that*, he will deserve anything he gets. Of course next Sunday I shall go to St. Didymus and see if the bait has taken.'

'Do you intend to tell the young lady?' I asked.

'Not a word, my dear fellow, not a word,' said Dick, 'and for the best possible reason, that she would highly disapprove of the whole proceeding. Besides, what good would it do? At present the note may have come from any one of the girls to whom he has "made eyes." But if I told Miss P—— she would certainly betray herself by blushing or showing some confusion next Sunday, and then the whole thing would be spoiled. No, I must not compromise her in any way. What a jolly sell it will be, though, for him, if he falls into the trap! Can't you fancy him in his pea-green tie? I chose that colour because he usually wears crimson silk.'

Well, a week after the above conversation Dick and I met again at his chambers by appointment. He told me that Mr. Hunter had obeyed the request so literally that he thought if we had begged him to wear a bonnet instead of a hat we might have expected compliance. The time was now come for a second letter, which was couched in the following elegant language.

'SIR,—How can I express to you in adequately *earnest* terms the great satisfaction, nay, the *pleasure*, which I felt in recognizing on your part, through the medium of a sign which I *myself* had suggested, an evidence of what, until I *knew* it, I did not dare to anticipate? I am going with my aunt (an old maid, very kind in *her way*, but unfortunately indifferent to the feelings of *young people*) into the City on Tuesday next, and I will try to be in the Temple Gardens between two and

three in the afternoon. I know it is indiscreet in me to say this, but I feel *confident* that I can rely on your *secrecy* and good faith. Perhaps I may be enabled to tell you this in *person*, but if not I am sure you will believe

'Your unknown but *sincere* friend,
'BELINDA.'

'P.S. If I am unfortunately detained until four or half-past you won't mind, will you? What a lovely colour that pea-green tie was, and *how well it became you!* Of course I couldn't *with propriety* take any notice of *you*, but I felt conscious that you had not forgotten *me*.'

'I'm afraid he'll see through it,' said Dick, as he folded up the letter. 'However, old fellow, you'll turn up here at any rate on Tuesday, and we'll keep a look-out for the young gentleman.'

* * * *

On Tuesday, the —th of January, 185— (you see I purposely refrain from giving the date in full, out of consideration for Mr. Tuftleigh Hunter's feelings, as he may, for aught I know, by this time be married, and have become the father of a family: if so, it will be far better for Mrs. T. H.'s happiness if she remains in ignorance of her husband's antecedents), on this bleak and frosty winter's day, as I was saying, two young and not altogether ill-favoured Englishmen might have been seen ensconced behind the ample folds of a red curtain which decorated a window in one of those quaint but historically interesting windows that command a view of the Temple Gardens. A pile of calf-bound tomes piled in careless confusion on an adjoining table indicated the legal studies in which one at least of the striplings was ostensibly engaged. But the remains of an unexceptionably grilled steak, and of what had once been a symmetrical pyramid of mashed potato, flanked by a tankard of foaming stout, would have inspired the most careless observer with a conviction that both these young gentlemen had lunched, while a recently-opened box of cigars, and a delicious perfume which hung

upon the noonday air, suggestive of the well-known Havannah plant, might have been accepted in evidence that the less necessary but more refined wants of civilized life were being amply satisfied.*

'How goes the time, Jack?' asked Mr. Dewberry, blowing rings of smoke out of an elegantly-carved meerschaum pipe. 'I let my watch fall in the racket-court, yesterday, and broke the mainspring, I think.'

'Ten minutes past two,' said I, after consulting my own chronometer.

'Then I give him up,' said Dick, rather gloomily; 'but hark! what is that striking now? You're a little fast, I believe, like some of my other friends. It is but just two o'clock, and—hallo, why there he is, I declare. Punctuality is not only the soul of business, but the very quintessence of confiding affection: and I say, my dear Jack, *do* look here,' adds Mr. Dewberry, bursting into a roar of laughter, 'I'm hanged if he hasn't sported the pea-green tie, as a delicate attention. Ah! my exquisite Mr. Tuffleigh, I really begin to pity you. This is verdant with a vengeance.'

It was too true. The misguided young man had appeared in full fig, and clad after a manner anything but suited to the inclemency of the weather, in order, I presume, to show off his figure to the best advantage. He was walking about with the air of a stage gallant, evidently rejoiced that he had arrived before his *inamorata*. After he had strolled up and down for about a quarter of an hour, however, he pulled out his watch and began to walk quicker, and no wonder, for it was intensely cold. Another interval, somewhat shorter than before, having elapsed, the elegant Tuffleigh again ascertained the time, and, to make assurance doubly sure, referred to a piece of paper which he drew from his coat-pocket, and which we felt

convinced was the letter that had lured him to his fate. Mr. Dewberry and I, who watched these proceedings with unremitting attention (except, indeed, during the brief moments in which we resplied ourselves to bottled stout), could not help remarking that the longer Mr. Tuffleigh stayed, the more frequently he looked at his watch, and the oftener he looked at his watch the further he extended his walk up and down. At last it began to grow dark, and Mr. Tuffleigh (we could see) began to grow impatient. He quickened his pace, stamping on the ground as he went, and warming the upper part of his frame after the fashion of London cabmen, who in winter time appear to be perpetually rehearsing with great vehemence the embracing of imaginary friends. At last, when it was becoming almost too dark to see anything, Mr. Tuffleigh disappeared, after having afforded us infinite amusement.

'Well, what is the next thing to be done?' said Mr. Dewberry, after the half-hour had struck, and our hero had disappeared. 'Do you think he'd stand another letter?'

'I should hardly think so; but you know best, Dick,' said I.

After a short consultation we wrote another note, with many apologies from the fair unknown, stating that her aunt had disappointed her, and that she had been unable to make her way that afternoon towards the Temple Gardens, but promising faithfully to be there the following Friday at the same hour, hoping to meet her correspondent, to whom she (of course) owed ten thousand obligations, &c. &c.

I must confess that Mr. Hunter showed a sound discretion in taking no notice of the last epistle. But we could not allow the matter to drop here. It was absolutely necessary to put the ingenuous youth on his guard for the future. He had been allowed to take an unconscious part in this little farce. It now remained for us to read him the moral.

Letter No. 3 was in these words.

'SIR,—Your disregard of 'Belinda's' last assignation is tolerably good evidence that you are now

* The composition of this last paragraph is not, I admit, in my usual style. But it is a style which, at the period referred to, found so much favour among a certain class of English novel readers that I felt an irresistible temptation to imitate it to the best of my humble ability.

aware how completely her first appointment made you the victim of a well-deserved hoax.

'You have for some time past been in the habit of annoying more than one lady by a species of rudeness which is all the more cowardly because it is difficult to define or bring home to you, and that, too, at a time and in a place which render your offence doubly inexcusable. Without entering into further particulars it is sufficient for you to know that these ladies have found a champion in one who, sorry as he would be to proceed to extremities, will assuredly take an early opportunity of calling you to account in a practical and not very pleasant manner if you have the temerity, after this warning, to continue your impertinencies. And, believe me, nothing but my desire to save these ladies from further annoyance has saved you, up to this time, from the chastisement which you richly deserve. It is scarcely necessary for

me to add that they are quite unaware of the means which I have thought fit to adopt for their protection.

'I have the honour to be, sir,
'Your most obedient servant,
'A ROD IN PICKLE.'

The effect of this last epistle was so satisfactory that Mr. Tuffleigh Hunter ceased to frequent the church of St. Didymus entirely, and I trust has since abstained from the offensive practice of ogling altogether. That ladies, especially when they happen to be young and pretty, are not utterly averse to being looked at with respectful admiration I candidly admit. Indeed, judging from my own experience, I have always found that—, but there, I won't go on further. You see, I'm turned of thirty, and the subject awakens sentiments in my heart which lead me to decline revealing *all* the Recollections of a Bachelor!

A WEEK IN A COUNTRY HOUSE.

WHEN the London season is over, and the dying notes of the session become distinct, all the world rushes off hither and thither to obtain relief from the trammels of London life, or to repair the ravages of late hours at watering-places at home or abroad, or to enter into all the healthy pursuits of a country life, and enjoy the relaxation which they afford, or to comply with the rules of fashion, which prescribe that no one who aspires to the distinction of belonging to the fashionable world can remain in town after a certain time, and also retain his reputation and position as a member of that most exclusive circle. There is nothing more absurd than the extent to which some persons bow to the decrees of fashion. Instances are by no means rare in which persons who have been detained in London by some unforeseen necessity or by accident during the 'recesses' of Easter or Whitsuntide, have been known to draw down their blinds

or shut their shutters, and live in some remote or back part of their house, that they may be supposed to have complied with the usages of 'society,' and to have left London for their 'seat in the country.' When Rotten Row is no longer frequented, and the throng of carriages in Bond Street and Regent Street is so diminished as not to interfere with the traffic nor peril the lives of the passers-by, and a certain carelessness in the arrangements of the shop-windows betray the fact that the rich and idle are gone beyond the reach of their temptation, country houses become in their turn the centres of festivities and of that social intercourse which knits families together. During the most bewitching time of the year the claims of the country have been overlooked, and it is therefore but fair that they should be recognized at last. In London 'society' is so *exigant* in her demands upon those who go in for it that people become her slaves, lose

much of their individuality, and are utterly unlike themselves. Few people can withstand the ordeal of a London life. The ceaseless round of dissipation and the multitude of interests, great and small, which constitute its claims, are so engrossing, that the instances are rare in which the same aspect is maintained in town and country. None are made to feel this more keenly than country cousins who come up to London, at rare intervals, for a short time to see the sights and hear the news, in the expectation of finding their friends equally interested in them and their affairs, as devoted to them as ever, and willing to resume the thread of their intercourse where it had been broken off. Vain expectation! Every one knows that in a vast metropolis like London, society is divided and subdivided into a multitude of different cliques or circles, and that each one is distinct from the others, and that every one who lives outside any particular circle is as much an alien to it as if he lived in Japan. Hence it arises that country cousins do not find themselves on the same level with their relations to whom they are an invaluable acquisition in the country, and by whom they are *fêted*; but seem suddenly to have dropped out of the mind and heart of those who suffer themselves to be engrossed and carried away by the rapid whirl of a London season. London fine ladies and gentlemen are quite a *class sui generis*. They live in a world of their own, obey a law of their own, and speak a language of their own. Excitement follows excitement, and anything like comfortable and rational intercourse is scarcely known among those who give themselves up entirely to the claims and usages of society. It is in country houses, where there is less of that exclusiveness which prevails in London, and is its bane, that we must look for that interchange of thoughts and ideas which makes society pleasant. We do not, of course, pretend to deny that London contains within itself all that is necessary to constitute the most agreeable society in the world.

Where so much talent and such varied gifts are collected together it could not be otherwise; but we maintain that, as a rule, the fashionable world is not the soil in which that highest order of intellectual gifts flourishes, nor the atmosphere which is the most conducive to its free expansion. Although every country house has its own especial friends, and its *habitués* belong more or less to a particular class, there is more geniality, more reality, more thoroughness in the intercourse. It is more earnest, more human, and therefore pleasanter and more satisfactory. It is not the same hollow, outside work which goes on in London, and it is as well that there should be seasons of interruption to that kind of life which fosters what is artificial, and must in the end stifle nature.

It was after a season of unusual gaiety, that Mrs. D—— and her son left London and went on their own devices to recruit or amuse themselves. Mrs. D—— went, in the first instance, to the seaside to restore the colour to her faded cheeks and renovate the strength which had been impaired by what she considered to be the duties she owed to society. She was a devoted mother, and her chief thought and study was how to advance the interests of her well-beloved son, Arthur; but she managed with considerable tact and cleverness to combine this with providing for herself as much amusement as she could enjoy. Arthur duly appreciated his mother's gifts and talents, which were considerable, and had always secured for her a ready admission to the best society; nor was he less touched by her devotion to himself. Under her protecting wing he had become a welcome guest in many pleasant houses, and Mrs. D—— showed her worldly wisdom and *savoir faire* when at her instigation they parted company for a time with a mutual understanding to keep each other *au courant* of all that happened. Their letters became a source of the greatest amusement to them. Their position, age, and circumstances, as well as the different society into which they

went, secured for them the greatest variety of incidents, which they were well able to make the most of.

It was not long after Mrs. D—— had left Brighton, where she devoted herself exclusively to the care of her health, that she yielded to the many pressing invitations which she had received from her old friends the Garringtons. The Garringtons were pleasant people; they were hospitable, and knew how to make the best use of the appliances within their reach. They had children in abundance, of all sizes and ages, and two grown-up daughters, who were among the most popular girls in Belgravia, were the immediate cause of those dinners and concerts and *thés dansantes* for which the Garringtons had made themselves famous. These young ladies were always surrounded by a knot of *Cavaliers servantes*, who were ever ready to fetch and carry, but these retrievers were for the most part poor, younger sons studying at the bar. However, Lady Garrington was not disquieted on their account, for she had too much confidence in her daughters' common sense, and in the principles she had inculcated, to have the slightest fear of their making a wrong move in the game of life which lay before them. Our friend Mrs. D—— was a great acquisition in a country house, for she possessed a fund of good humour, was always ready to be of use, had a remarkable talent for conversation, as well as other resources, which made her the life and soul of whatever society she frequented. It was soon after her arrival at Garrington Manor that she sat herself down to write to 'her boy,' as she always called her son. Her letters were more or less of a journal, but as they are descriptive of the scenes in which she played so conspicuous a part, we will let them speak for themselves.

'MY DEAR BOY,—Your mother has so much confidence in your care for number one that she will not begin her letter in the old style, "this comes hopping you are well as it leaves me;" but I will tell you my adventures since I left the Pall Mall of the seaside. Here I am at last

at Garrington Manor, after the many pressing invitations which I have till now left unheeded. It was by no means a difficult journey, which, however, Rachel' (her maid, Ed. L. S.) 'made even less difficult than it would have been, for her pretty face captivated guards and porters to such a degree that we received the greatest consideration and attention from them, and I doubled it down in my memory as a thing to be remembered that elderly women who are addicted to travelling about should secure the attendance of a pretty girl as lady's maid. On my arrival at the station I found everything ready for the removal of myself, bag and baggage, to the Manor; and when we arrived at the door a bevy of the most polite and obsequious servants awaited me, hastening to relieve me of my inseparable bag, and assuring me that Lady Garrington had been anxiously expecting me. Before I could turn round I found myself greeted in the warmest manner possible by my lady, who would insist upon my coming to her own room and having some tea (she knew my weak point), away from all the racket and noise which the young people were said to be making over croquet on the lawn. After sufficient time had been allowed for Rachel to unpack, I took refuge in my own room, having ascertained at what hour I was expected to make my appearance. I found Rachel in high glee, getting over her duties with wonderful alacrity, from which I inferred that she had again made a favourable impression, and that men are the same everywhere. You know I always like to be in time, and hate rushing down at the last moment into the midst of a crowd of people whom I don't know; so when Rachel had turned me off to her satisfaction, and I had been properly got up *à quatre épingles*, I descended to the drawing-room and found that I had it all to myself. Presently, however, the door opened, and a handsome youth, whom I had never seen before to my knowledge, sauntered in. It would be incorrect to say he walked in, it would be more true to say he rolled himself in. We looked

at each other, and the handsome youth seemed to grow afraid of me, for instead of approaching the part of the room where I sat, he rolled himself on towards the window, while he drew a cambric handkerchief from his pocket and tenderly smoothed his young moustache. Again the door opened, and a fair and pretty girl tripped in, looking light and airy as a gossamer. She came towards me; I rose, we curtsied, we squiddled, and said a few nothings to each other, and then the handsome youth began to thaw in the presence of beauty, and we all talked together of *la pluie et le beau temps* till the gong sounded, and many steps were heard approaching, and the Brownes and the Whites and the Garringtons all flocked in and greeted me. At dinner the handsome youth sat on my right and Beauty next to him. He was supercilious, and she listened devoutly to his dull platitudes, and I speculated upon how small an amount of thoughts and ideas, when in combination with *beaux yeux* the tender passion can take root in and exist. Well, all things come to an end, and so did my first evening at Garrington Manor, which I was not sorry for.

'The next morning, after having given special directions to Rachel to have my room ready as soon as she could, that I might write my letters, I went down to breakfast, and, to my dismay, found the whole party assembled, busily engaged in discussing their breakfast, but in almost solemn silence. The Garringtons, *père et mère*, were absorbed in their letters, while the rest waited patiently for such scraps of news as were vouchsafed to them at intervals. It was a solemn affair, and I became more convinced that it would be a wiser custom for people to eat their breakfast in their own rooms and not appear in public till they had been sustained and fortified by it. However, my late entrance created a diversion. I found your letter on my plate and put it into my pocket after I had satisfied myself that you were all right. No sooner was breakfast over than I found myself seized upon by the

second Garrington girl, who entreated me to go with them. "Where in the name of heaven am I to go?" I inquired, thinking all the while that I had only just come, and longing to be quiet in my own room. After having quelled Miss Helen's energetic entreaties by an assurance that I would do whatever was required of me, I found myself engaged to go to Vere Abbey, a beautiful old ruin, I was told, where it was proposed to have a pic-nic. You know my horror of pic-nics, where people try their best to make themselves as uncomfortable as they can under the pretence of amusing themselves. The handsome youth was attacked by Beauty with numberless inquiries whether he could make a fire of damp sticks and boil a kettle, and I was amused at his look of consternation. However, there is no use in contending with the inevitable, so I quietly acquiesced and came down at the appointed hour duly equipped. The handsome youth and I began to fraternise, and I could not deny myself the malicious pleasure of teasing him by assuming that pic-nics were his *métier*, and that we all looked to him for help under the host of probable difficulties which I described as vividly and painfully as I could, while he sat on thorns at the prospect before him. When the carriages came round we were not long in arranging and disposing of our party. We all tried to be as merry as we could, and, luckily for us, the sun shone out brightly. After lionising Vere Abbey, which is really a beautiful ruin belonging to the old family of the De Vares, we disposed of ourselves according to our inclinations, and the whole party was scattered here and there, on the understanding that at a given time all should reassemble for luncheon. I had fortunately brought my drawing-book and prepared to sketch the ruin, when I was interrupted by some of the younger Garringtons, who assured me they delighted in nothing so much as watching a person draw. "Had I any colours? Oh! yes, I see, there they are. May we look at them?" A thousand questions were asked about what colours made what shades. "Had I a spare sheet of

drawing-paper? Would I let them have it?" To all of which I was as complaisant as possible, and soon I saw my colour-box in a mess, my brushes saturated with water and paint, the spare sheet daubed over, and in despair I gave up the attempt on finding that I was expected to give a drawing lesson to my young friends, who ran off the moment luncheon-time drew near, leaving me to tidy it all as best I might. Then followed luncheon, when we sat on the damp grass or on the carriage-cushions, eating cold chicken and pies and salad, which is always on such occasions associated in my mind with slugs and earwigs. After the cravings of hunger had been satisfied we dispersed again, while the servants regaled themselves and packed up the knives and forks, &c., when we were hurried off, Lady G—— in despair that it was already so late, as a party of neighbours were expected to dinner, and unless we made great haste there would be scarcely time to dress, which was a subject of the greatest importance in Lady G——'s estimation. We did arrive, and, happily, before the invited guests, so Lady G—— was tolerably composed, and with hasty glances at the clock we all rushed off to get ready for dinner. Rachel is invaluable at a pinch, and I was among the first to reach the drawing-room; but what with the sun, the drive home, and the hurry of dressing, I felt scorched and anything but comfortable. However, it was all part of the play, and I was in for it. We were in no lack of subjects for conversation. Vere Abbey, its past history and its present state, was a safe subject, and you will be glad to hear that your mother did not, as you say, "put her foot into it." She was wonderfully cautious and circumspect, and I am sure earned for herself the reputation of being the most matter-of-fact of dames. As far as I was concerned all would have gone on smoothly enough but for one *contretemps*. Something, I don't know what, perhaps I had caught cold from sitting on the damp grass, or some spiteful fly may have provoked my nose; anyhow something made me sneeze,

and in the greatest hurry I had recourse to my pocket handkerchief, when to my dismay I found it was the one which I had had in the morning, and which in my hurry I had caught up and put into my pocket. It was all over paint, thanks to my young would-be artist friends.

'The handsome youth looked at me with astonishment, and then burst into a loud fit of laughter. Beauty was startled at such an unwonted exhibition, and inquired into the cause, which he was quite unable to explain; and I, seizing the bull by the horns, declared myself to be the innocent occasion of it, and, making a sign to him not to betray me, kept them all for some time on the tiptoe of curiosity, which I at last gratified, when they seemed to me to be vastly disappointed that it was nothing worse.

'The next day I thought I should have to myself; so I planned exactly what I would do, and again gave Rachel strict injunctions to have my room got ready as soon as possible. After breakfast was over, and I had seated myself in my chair, and had collected round me all that I needed, I began to comfort myself with the thought that I should have, at all events, an hour or two to myself, when I heard a gentle tap at the door, and a lovely child with golden hair came in, inquiring whether she might come and sit with me a little while, as her sisters and the governess were gone into the village, and her mamma had said that if she could find Mrs. D——, she was sure she would tell her some stories; and mamma says no one can tell a story as well as you. "Will oo tell me one?" added she, imploringly. Who could resist such an appeal? So I looked at my books and my pen and ink, and all my preparations, and again surrendered myself to the inevitable, but not without a sigh. I moved to the open window, placed my young friend on a chair by my side, and began my story; when again another tap at the door, and another child came in search of her sister, and entreated that she, too, might be allowed to remain and listen to the story. No one ever had

better listeners, so I ought to have been satisfied. I had nearly finished my task, when another knock at my door interrupted us, and the eldest of the sisters came to say that her mother wished me to come and sit with her in her room, till luncheon-time, if I was not otherwise engaged. At the entreaty of my young friends, I wound up my story and complied with Lady Garrington's request. So that morning was gone, and the afternoon was devoted to another excursion, after which we were all expected to play at croquet till dressing time. The next day it was the same thing over again. I got up earlier than usual, to write one or two letters which I could not put off, and after breakfast again took refuge in my room, in the hope of a few moments' peace, which I thought I had secured, for I began a letter to you, which I hoped I might finish before post-time; but at about half-past eleven I was interrupted by a tap at my door, and the door was slowly opened by the eldest daughter, who "hoped she did not disturb me," that I was not particularly engaged, because "mamma" had sent her to ask whether I would make a sketch of her. She already had one which I had done, of her eldest son, who was then with his regiment in India, and she would so like me to do one of her; and she went on to ask whether I would object to Beauty's coming too, to watch how I did it. Of course I was only too glad to be of use, and begged her to go and fetch her friend Beauty, while I got my materials ready. So, in sheer veneration of spirit, I put the letter I had begun to you into the fire, and got my paper, and chalk, and paints all ready for the operation. I knew well enough what Beauty's coming meant. It was only a prelude to my making a sketch of her; so I prepared with a good grace to receive all the hints which oozed out in due time. This occupied me the remainder of my mornings while I

stayed at the Manor; and as the afternoons were devoted to driving and croquet, and the evenings to dancing and singing, I had no time to myself, but was kept in a continual whirl of occupation which had nothing to do with the many things I wanted to do. Poor Lady Garrington! she is kindness itself, and very warmhearted, but she does not realize the fact that people have their own interests and pursuits which they may wish to attend to. She has an idea that there cannot be any happiness in the world without some sort of gaiety; that the moment breakfast has been disposed of a *carte* must be arranged for the disposal of every hour of the day; and that a country house must be the abode of dullness unless one is always on the trot hunting after amusement and diversion of some kind. There never can be any repose where she is, and I am no longer surprised at the way in which Lord G—— shuts himself up in his own room and is scarcely visible except at meal-times. Yet her kindness is so great, and she has so much real desire to make her guests happy, and takes so much trouble to effect it (though it must be confessed that she likes to do it her own way and not theirs), that one cannot quarrel with her, or be otherwise than touched by her wish to make her house pleasant.' * * *

The remainder of Mrs. D——'s letter related to matters which concerned only herself and her son, and possess no interest for others. Her week at Garrington Manor is a fair sample of life at some country houses, where there are marriageable daughters, and where frantic efforts are being made for the amusement of the company. To those who are neither in their *première jeunesse* nor have daughters on hand, such a life is a positive penance, from which one is only too glad to escape in spite of all its hospitality.



AMBASSADORS OUT OF WORK.

WHAT on earth is to become of the ambassadors by-and-bye? The world is all at sixes and sevens so far as those functionaries are concerned. Ambassadors extraordinary, ministers plenipotentiary, envoys extraordinary and ordinary, secretaries of legation, secretaries of embassy, all are asking when *their* turn will come to be put out of joint. What with nationality and the needle gun, the diplomatic corps is sorely perplexed. The normal state, the etiquette when matters are going on smoothly, is just this—that majesty must be represented wherever other majesty exists. Our queen may not have much to do with the sovereign prince of a state about as large (but nothing near so populous) as the parish of St. Pancras; nevertheless she must have some one to represent her at his court—to look aristocratic; to wear a court suit; to speak the prince's language; to attend levées and birthday receptions; to make a complimentary call of inquiry when the prince has the toothache; to convey an unpleasant message in words so full of politeness as to take off the sting; and to open his eyes and ears and shut his mouth whenever policy dictates caution. To a few great powers, such as Austria (dynastically great though sadly bruised), France, Prussia, Russia, and Turkey we send a very big man indeed, under the title of 'Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,' and give him from six to ten thousand a year to support his dignity. To states of the second rank, such as Belgium, Denmark, &c., we send an 'Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary,' whose diplomatic pay generally varies from three to six thousand per annum. In one, the lately organized embassy to Japan, Sir Harry Parkes has the very long designation, 'Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary and Consul-General.' Some are simply 'Ministers Plenipotentiary,' and one is 'Minister Resident and Consul-General.' These gold-laced individuals have very exact rules one among another,

and among the diplomatic representatives of other countries, on all matters relating to etiquette and comparative rank; and if any one feels his pride offended by the sovereign to whom he is accredited, he makes it to be understood that *his* sovereign is offended; and then some kind of delicate court plaster is applied to heal up the wound. It is among these recipients of favour from the Foreign Office that a good deal of bewilderment is observable just now. Stern facts have been playing a game at nine-pins with royal and grand ducal crowns, knocking them about the heads of the luckless wearers. Not long ago there was a King of Naples (or of 'the Two Sicilies,' in diplomatic language); and there were Grand Dukes of Tuscany, Parma, and Modena. To all of these, in some form or other, our queen was wont to send envoys or ministers; but now Victor Emmanuel has turned them all out, and made their dominions component parts of the mighty kingdom of Italy; one diplomatic representative, at Florence, suffices for all; and if Italy should stand her ground well, and grow in strength, possibly our minister at that beautiful city will be raised to the dignity of 'Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.' Then, in Germany, Prussia has swallowed up Hanover and most of the other component members of the disjointed Germanic Confederation; and although Saxony is not quite snapped up, King William has supplanted King John for all military and diplomatic purposes. It thus arises that our Sir Henry Howard has nothing particular to do at Hanover, Sir Alexander Malet nothing at Frankfort, Mr. Murray nothing at Dresden. When Maximilian became a bran-new Emperor of Mexico, we sent our Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to recognise him on the part of Queen Victoria; but if he should become—or if he has already become—a 'monarch out of business,' we shall have to see how the cards will be shuffled by Juarez, Ortega, Santa

Anna, and the United States, before we can tell whether it is worth while to spend three or four thousand a year upon a representative in that torn and bewildered country.

And as to the ministers in chief, so to their lieutenants, the 'Secretaries of Embassy and Legation,' if the one turns out, so must the other, and so must numerous *attachés* and subordinate secretaries. These berths are eagerly looked for, often by favourites at court, or by the younger sons of the nobility, as easy modes of serving an apprenticeship to courtly and ministerial life.

Just about ten years ago, the Earl of Clarendon, at that time Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, sought to give a useful turn to the thoughts of these secondary diplomatists, by suggesting to them the collection of information likely to be serviceable, both to themselves and to others. The move was so decidedly in the right direction, that good results are sure to flow from it, whether continental kinglings, princelings, and dukelings are knocked about or not. The earl, writing to the chiefs of all the British embassies at foreign courts, set forth his ideas in the following clear and explicit way:—'Her Majesty's Government, being desirous to encourage the junior members of the diplomatic service to turn to account the opportunities of observation afforded to them by their employment at foreign courts, have determined to assign a specific duty to her Majesty's Secretaries of Embassy and Legation,* which will not only tend to their own improvement in their profession, but which may, if properly performed, be productive of great public advantage.'

Then comes the *modus operandi*. 'The duties to be thus specifically

assigned to the Secretaries of Embassy and Legation are—the collection of information relating to the commercial movements of the country where they reside, and the compilation of periodical reports on the industry, trade, and general statistics of that country. The bearing which those elements of national prosperity in the one country has on its intercourse with foreign nations, and more particularly with her Majesty's dominions, is so important that too much pains cannot be bestowed upon furnishing to her Majesty's Government the means of forming a correct opinion.' The earl adverted to the fact that British consuls at foreign ports have long been in the habit of supplying information annually concerning the trade of those ports with other places; but such information need not at all shut the door against the proposed ambassadorial exertions. 'Her Majesty's diplomatic servants, residing at the capitals, have opportunities of arriving at a more general appreciation of the commercial progress of the several countries, and of ascertaining the grounds on which legislative interference with the course of trade is resorted to, and the effect which such interference is calculated to have, not only on local or general interests in the countries themselves, but also on the commercial relations of those countries with foreign nations. Her Majesty's Secretaries of Embassy and Legation, with a view to the same result, might occasionally, and with the sanction of their chiefs, visit the great manufacturing towns, and also, in maritime countries, the outports, and witness the course of business there; and, if necessary, suggest, from personal experience, the adoption of measures by which the trade of British subjects might obtain facilities, or be relieved from burdens and obstructions.'

But the boys must not go poking their noses hither and thither without the consent of their master. The chief must sanction everything, and the reports must be made to him in the first instance. On the other hand, each chief is called upon to fulfil his part towards the work. 'Her Majesty's Government expect that

* Where there is an 'Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,' the second in command is the 'Secretary of Embassy,' but where the chief is 'Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary,' his second is called 'Secretary of Legation.' Like as with the chiefs, so with the seconds, there are gradations of rank and of emolument: the Secretaries of Embassy receiving from eight hundred to a thousand a-year, while the Secretaries of Legation receive from four to eight hundred.

the heads of missions (embassies, &c.) will give effect to the object which they have in view, by obtaining for their secretaries access to all sources of information, by encouraging them with their support and advice, and by pointing out to them the matters to which their attention may most usefully be directed.' In order to give immediate practical value to these labours, it is requested that the reports shall be presented twice a year from the secretaries to the chiefs of embassy, and by the latter, with any necessary observations or explanations, to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Excellent, all this : making these young diplomatists acquainted with the busy driving world of commerce, as well as with the ceremonial world of court. The earl recapitulated the advantages of the system thus : — 'It will benefit the secretaries by giving them habits of attention and observation ; it will assist the heads of missions, by affording them additional facilities for arriving at a just knowledge of the resources of the countries in which they reside ; and it will place her Majesty's Government, and the public at large, in possession of valuable materials, on which to frame commercial legislation and regulate commercial enterprise.'

The secretaries, all things considered, have done their work very well, collecting a large amount of curious information on the trade, manufactures, and general statistics of the countries in which they reside. They set to work at once ; and the first to respond to the instructions of the Earl of Clarendon was Mr. Erskine, Secretary of Legation at Sardinia — before Victor Emmanuel had changed his title from King of Sardinia to King of Italy, and his capital from Turin to Florence. This was in the middle of 1857 ; and ever since that time there have been regular reports from all or nearly all the countries to which we send embassies and envoys. The first year brought forward reports from Sardinia, Belgium, Bavaria, Switzerland, France, Denmark, and the Germanic Confederation (in those days represented at Frank-

fort). We have thus a double allowance. Every year there are 'Abstracts of Reports of the Trade of various Countries and Places, received by the Board of Trade through the Foreign Office, from her Majesty's Ministers and Consuls.' And every year, in like manner, we have 'Reports by Secretaries of Embassy and Legation on the Manufactures and Commerce of Foreign Countries.' Generally speaking each consul contents himself with about five or six folio pages of matter ; and there are such reports from eighty or ninety different places, in all parts of the world. The Secretaries of Embassy and Legation are a little more ambitious ; they fill ten folio pages of print or so, on an average ; and when five-and-thirty of them do this, as was the case in a recent year, the amount of information rendered concerning foreign countries is really very considerable. Practical men sometimes smile a little at some of the reports, in regard to generalisations and theorisings which betray the mind of an amateur or dilettanti statistical philosopher ; but for the most part the reports are reliable and valuable.

Sometimes the secretaries pick up information on special subjects, which allow of direct comparison with similar subjects in England. Thus, in one particular year (1864), Mr. Burnley sent in a special report on the silk industry of Basle in Switzerland ; Mr. Ward on railway communication in Holland ; Mr. Barnard on the branches of industry in which steam and machinery are employed in Saxony ; and (in reference to political organization rather than to industrial pursuits), Mr. Lytton on the election of representatives for the Rigsgaad in Denmark. Some of these special reports are curious ; such as Mr. Barnard's on fires and fire insurance in Saxony, suggesting means of comparison with our own home system here in England. For instance, we are told, 'The value of such building must be taxed before insurance takes place, by persons appointed for that purpose. The part of any building underground is not taken into consideration ; and the different parts above ground, stone and wood,

are valued separately. Every householder must insure the half of the valuation; he can, however, insure the whole.' Again: 'Stone and brick are not insured, but only the combustible parts of the building.' One remark points to a state of things certainly the reverse of that which exists in England: 'In villages in a manufacturing district the houses are generally less crowded and stand more apart, and the fires are less considerable, than in agricultural districts, where the houses are closely adjoining, and much more exposed to danger.' We are told that 'In villages, fires have generally their origin in wilful incendiarianism or by lightning.' One statement has a very ugly appearance: 'No doubt exists of a comparatively large proportion of fires being caused with a view of receiving the amount of insurance; but the difficulty of proving the crime is so great, that in very few instances can the perpetrator be convicted.'

Another special report, on the state railways of Belgium, is worth the attention of those who wish our Government to take the railway system under their control. During seventeen years the Chamber of Accounts and the Ministry of Works prepared wholly irreconcilable balance-sheets of the profit and loss on Belgian railways; the only thing certain was, that the net profit did not pay the interest of the borrowed money with which the lines were constructed. Since then matters have improved; but we are nevertheless told that 'The history of these undertakings is not calculated to encourage other nations to enter upon the same path.'

So far, then, we have had to speak of a very useful mode of employing the seconds in command at our several embassies; but now for the other side.

Let us mourn over the tribulations of the '*Almanach de Gotha*,' in connection with the stirring events which have resulted in ambassadors being 'out of work.' It is, in truth, an embarrassing problem to solve. The fat little book will not know how to comport itself. The eleven hundred pages in the

edition for 1866, published a year or so ago, was the hundred and third annual publication. For more than a century has this record of royalty appeared. Every personage who has the sixteenth part of a drop of imperial, royal, princely, grand-ducal, or arch-ducal blood in his veins, finds his pedigree and heraldic merits here set forth. Would we know what sort of dignity hovers round the husband of our Princess Helena, we can ascertain exactly the relative position of the elder branch and the younger branch of the great house of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderbourg-Augustenburg, despite the fact that Count von Bismarck shows the most superb contempt for any claim that Duke Frederick or Prince Christian may put forth for governing power in the Elbe duchies. Would we know who is the Prince de Teck, to whom our kindhearted and bright-eyed Princess Mary of Cambridge is married, we should be able to find (though, it is true, at the expense of no small amount of search) that Prince Francis Paul Charles Louis Alexander de Teck is the son of Duke Alexander Paul Louis Constantine, who was an uncle to the late King of Wurtemberg, who was father to the present King of Wurtemberg; and that as Prince de Teck's mother, Claudine, Countess of Hohenstein and Rheday, was not *quite* royal in birth (being a Hungarian lady of noble but not sovereign blood), Prince de Teck and his two sisters can only be made fully royal by the gracious favour of the King of Wurtemberg, which favour has been awarded. Would we know what prince or princess in the whole of Europe is blessed with the greatest number of names, we should be enabled to pitch upon a young gentleman just now a year and a half old, who has the honour to be the second son of the King of Portugal. He, the '*Almanach de Gotha*' tells us (in French spelling, not Portuguese), is Prince Alphonse Henri Napoléon Marie Louis Pierre-d'Alcantara Charles Herbert Amédée Fernando Antoine Michel Raphael Gabriel Gonzaga Xavier François-d'Assise Jean Auguste Jules Valfando Ig-

nace-de-Bragança-Savoie-Bourbon-Saxe-Cobourg et Gotha. If we had put it in Portuguese, the rigmarole would have been still more sonorous, with its Carlos and Pedro, Francisco and Fernando, Alfonso and Antonio; but even as it is, the small boy has quite enough to carry, and we only marvel in what terms the tutor will by-and-by address him—to birch a boy with thirty names is of course not to be thought of. The little boy Don has got a little Donna cousin, too, some four or five years old, who, it seems, cannot be properly addressed in a smaller compass than Donna Marie Anne de Carmel Henrique Thérèse Adelaide Jeanne Caroline Agnes Sophie Eulalie Leopoldine Elizabeth Bernardine Michaelae Gabrielle Raphaele Francoise-d'Assise et de Paul Ignatie Gonzague!

This 'Almanach' is the authority to which royalty looks when a marriageable prince or princess is wanted. As royal blood must only wed royal blood, or something like it, it is a matter of great importance to know where that blood is to be found, of the right age and at the right time. Russia, for instance, unless cousins marry (which they do not so much in that country as in Austria), must seek elsewhere for husbands and wives; and as a state, however small, will meet the requisite conditions if the blood is all right, Russia makes alliances with her humbler neighbours. Thus, the late czar married a Prussian princess, the present czar a Hessian princess; his second son (the eldest being dead) has just married the beautiful Princess Dagmar of Denmark; the czar's sister Olga married the Prince Royal of Wurtemberg; and his brother Constantine a princess of Saxe Altenburg; and his brother Nicholas a princess of Oldenburg; and his brother Michael a princess of Baden; and his cousin Catherine the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz—and so on. These alliances do not prevent royalty from making war on royalty; the Hesses and Saxes have been more or less devoured by Prussia, notwithstanding their matrimonial connections with Russia; and as to

the recent war in Bohemia, Uncle William has so terribly thrashed Nephew Frank, that it is very problematical whether the latter will ever recover.

Certainly the 'Almanach de Gotha' ought to put on mourning just now; for it is difficult to see how the break-up of Germany is to be described. Possibly the richness of the blood may be deemed a counterbalance to the political misfortunes of the kings, princes, and serene dukes; and royal match-makers may know where to go, as they have hitherto known. In so far as our own royal family are concerned, the choice is less extensive than for royal families on the Continent, seeing that our young brides and bridegrooms must all be Protestants. Our Alfred is twenty-two, our Louisa is nearly nineteen; we must of course look out for a bride for the one and a husband for the other. We must not, however, look to Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Belgium, or the Catholic States of Germany, nor to Russia, nor to any state where the Greek Church prevails; Prussia, the other Protestant states of Germany, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden must supply us; and the far-famed 'Almanach' tells us exactly the names and ages of all the lads and lasses whose blood is of the right colour and consistency. For, be it remarked, it is only the 'première partie' of the Almanach that must be consulted for such a purpose; the second part relates to 'Princes not Sovereign,' from which we are taught to believe that the families of the Altieris, Arenbergs, Auerpergs, Belgiojoses, Batthyany, Bentheissas, Borgheses, Chimays, Colonnas, &c., though possibly very nice people, are not nice enough for royalty to take to the altar—except in those morganatic or left-handed marriages which play such a curious part on the Continent.

The 'ambassadors out of work' must get over their difficulty somehow: if Italy and Prussia have swallowed a dozen states to which we used to send embassies, the young diplomatists must learn to make themselves useful in other capacities.

A SUMMER TRIP ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

A Reminiscence.

BY ONE WHO HELPED TO LAY THE CABLE.

DEAR MARCUS,

YOU, who have listened with credulity to the whisperings of wisacres, and have followed with eagerness the foreboding phantoms of mock wisdom—who have expected that time would fulfil the despairing prophecies of the newspapers, and that the disasters of last year would be repeated in this, attend to the tale of the successful laying of the Atlantic cable.

I dare say, now that you have read so far, your wonder at receiving so big a parcel by the post is a little allayed. I presume you do not forget the promise you exacted from me in June last, when you bade me good-bye on board the 'Great Eastern.' As you were leaving the ship, with a certain sweet young thing (who shall be nameless) upon your arm, you said, 'Good-bye, old fellow, mind you drop us a line when you get back, and tell us all about it.' Now do you remember?

To tell you all about it would be simply ridiculous. I am well aware that, in common with all other Christian gentlemen, you see the 'Times' daily, and that you have read the accounts forwarded to that paper from time to time by our historian, Mr. Deane. I shall therefore confine myself to such matters as have not been narrated in the daily papers, and will endeavour to amuse you for a few minutes with a little 'Great Eastern' gossip, and try to give you some insight, however slight, into the daily life on board the great ship.

A small paper packet accompanies this letter. Do not throw it away. It is of exceeding value, a pearl of great price. It is not one of Dr. Gregory's far-famed powders, nor is it a portion of sand scraped from the roadside. It is something far more precious, though it may not appear so to the naked eye. It is ooze from the bed of the Atlantic Ocean, that came up on one of the

grappling-ropes, and which I picked out from the interstices of the same, by means of great patience, an old penknife, and the point of a breast-pin. If you do not appreciate it yourself, make a handsome present to some of your scientific friends, and they will love you and venerate your name for ever after. I will give you, however, one word of advice. Do not let the world in general know that you are the possessor of such an invaluable treasure, or you will be tormented out of your life. Every post will bring letters in strange handwritings that will worry a man of your nervous temperament into a fever. There comes a rat-tat at the door, and in a minute a budget of letters is handed in, in all kinds of envelopes and external coverings, and directed in every species of caligraphic character, with none of which you are acquainted. You have a vague idea that the big blue letter is a gentle reminder from Mr. Snippet, 'that you would greatly oblige him by settling his little account;' but on opening it you find, to your delight and amazement, that it is only from little Mudlark, the amateur geologist, whom you once met for five minutes during a morning call, and who, strange to say, has taken upon himself to write to you. Through four sides of a sheet of note-paper he goes on to say that, 'through the medium of the daily press he has watched the progress of the truly national work with great interest; that he is sure that your untiring zeal and energy have mainly contributed towards the glorious success; and that when a grateful government raises you to the peerage, no one will rejoice more sincerely than Theophilus Mudlark, and—and could you oblige me with a small quantity—only a few grains—of ooze?' This is a fair sample of the curiosity-begging letter, but they are numerous in number and

diverse in sentiment. One correspondent (of course a lady) ventures to ask 'if she may enrich her photographic album with the counterfeited presentment of so distinguished a character as yourself;' another would feel more than grateful if you would give him a short piece of the 'magic rope' for the Snoozleum Museum; and a third requests a small present of some other kind, say, 'a model of the paying-out gear,' 'the grapnel,' or 'a yard of the grappling-rope.' Take warning, therefore, and keep a discreet silence on the subject of the coze.

The trip round the Channel, from Sheerness to Beerhaven, was a lark, in fact it was four days' yachting in the finest yacht that ever floated. The weather was glorious; the spirits of all on board were at the highest point; a generous board of directors had looked nobly after our creature comforts, and, in addition to all this, there were some twelve or fourteen ladies on board, who added materially to the elegance, the comforts, and the pleasures of this part of our voyage. Perhaps the best fun we had going round was the performance of the 'Field Glass,' a burlesque, in fact, by Messrs. Woods and Parkinson. This was a good-humoured skit on the whole of the undertaking, and occasioned not a little laughter and merriment, more especially as no one who was at all prominently connected with the enterprise escaped the good-natured lash of the satirist. The performance was most grand. By means of union jacks and ensigns we rigged up a first-rate theatre in the grand saloon, with a row of footlights and an orchestra, quite like the genuine article. The gentlemen of the press occupied several of the front seats, and when the curtain rose and discovered two lovely mermaids and a Triton enjoying a siesta, there was quite a burst of applause, that reminded one of Boxing-night. How those sweet mermaids got dressed will always remain to me a mystery. They were a sort of composition ladies, half ballet-girls and half John Bright to look at, but lovely withal. If their waists were a trifle bigger than

would be admitted as 'correct' in the pages of the 'Follet,' why let us say that it was the fault of the dress; and if the size of their shoes was something over 'six and a half ladies,' let us put down the fact to the score of the maker. Whatever individual faults carping critics may have detected, I am positively certain that the *tout ensemble* was perfect; and even at this distance of time my pen trembles as I write on the subject of those truly elegant 'critturs.'

The tranquillity of the opening scene was soon disturbed by Neptune, got up in the mythological style, who entered, quickly followed by Mr. Dudley, arrayed exactly like Mr. Glass. The entrance of this last gentleman was the signal for fresh applause. The resemblance in dress, manner, and make-up to the person he was supposed to represent was so extraordinary, that the audience could scarcely believe their eyes, and as they looked from the original, who sat in the front row of the stalls, to the actor on the stage, the laughter rang out in louder peals than ever. It was quite like a scene from the 'Comedy of Errors.' Which Dromio was which? No one seemed to enjoy the joke more than Mr. Glass himself, who applauded and laughed with the loudest. That he may rise from his sick bed, and live many years to laugh again, is, I am sure, the sincere prayer of all connected in any way with the Atlantic telegraph. Seems it not sad, on the completion of a great work, the dream of years, that the prime mover of the whole affair should be unable to participate in the rejoicings around him, but should be obliged to send his congratulations and receive his well-merited honours on a bed of sickness, prepared for him by over work and over anxiety for a great cause? When we got to Beerhaven, all our fair fellow-travellers took their leave, and left us alone. This was sad indeed; but one cannot be dull on board a ship like the 'Great Eastern,' where so much of interest is daily going on.

There were now several arrangements to be made before we started

on the real business of the expedition. Some thousands of tons of coal had to be taken on board, and for this purpose nearly a hundred of the native peasantry had been engaged. Their pay was to be 5s. a day and their rations, and yet, notwithstanding the munificence of the stipend, devil a bit would they work. No, they were full of excuses. 'Oh, bedad, your honor, I'll do as much work as ony man, barring it's not in a caul hole.' 'Put me in the open fields, your honor, to hay mowing or cow milking, and I'm the boy that will tire out the parish; but, by jabers! 'twould tear the soul out of ony man to work all day with his mouth so full of cinders that he can't spit.' And so on, through fifty or sixty. The end of it was, that they all had permission to go, and the 5s. per diem was given to the ship's men, who were glad enough to get it, and willing to work.

The 'Great Eastern' is a wonderful ship, but not until you have lived on board her for at least a week are you fully aware of her size. Every day one comes across something new that strikes with amazement. As an instance of this, let me mention the shorings of the tanks. It is exceedingly unpleasant to have to perform the journey necessary to see them, but in the end the adventurous traveller is well repaid. You cannot see much after all, except what is revealed by the light of an oil lamp, for in these regions darkness reigns supreme. What this part of the ship was used for before the tanks were erected I have not an idea, but now it presents the appearance of a dead forest, all the trees of which have been roughly trimmed. The amount of timber used for supporting the tanks is simply appalling, and must be reckoned by shiploads. Huge beams stretch in all directions, vertical, horizontal, and diagonal, tiring the eye by their similarity and numbers, and giving an idea of almost unnecessary strength. This may be so as long as the ship is at rest, but when she begins to roll, as she alone knows how, it must be work of extraordinary solidity, and put to-

gether with great engineering skill, that will bear up against a dead weight of 2000 tons pressing upon it in all directions. Another remarkable spot is the ship's ice-house, where were stored some 100 tons of ice and nearly 20,000 lb. of dead meat. Another spot worthy of notice was the farm-yard in the bow of the ship. Here was a flock of 114 sheep, a herd of 10 oxen, a milch cow, and 36 pigs, besides 300 head of poultry. By closing the eyes, and simply listening to the chorus of bleating, lowing, cackling, and crowing, one imagined oneself in a large farm-yard in the depths of Hampshire rather than on board the 'Great Eastern.' On July 12th we sailed from Beechaven, and by three P.M. on the following day we had effected the splice with the shore end off Valentia, and had fairly started on our journey across the Atlantic. The voyage, as of course you know, was one of uninterrupted prosperity. We steamed slowly but surely ahead, and the cable passed noiselessly and continuously over the wheel in the stern for fourteen long days and as many nights. The insulation was always perfect, ditto the continuity. In fact, everything was managed so well, and all possible accidents were so wonderfully guarded against, that had it not been for one little incident that rather woke us up, I am afraid we should have regarded the laying of an Atlantic cable as one of the simplest operations possible, and nothing to make a fuss about. The night of July 17th will always be easily remembered by all who sailed in the 'Great Eastern' on that occasion. This was the night on which the 'foul flake' occurred. I dare say you are rather wondering what a 'foul flake' is. I will try and tell you. As the cable was leaving the tank, and as one of the coils nearest to the circumference was sweeping inwards towards the 'eye,' passing, in its course, over the flake of cable next beneath it, a rough piece of yarn or a projecting wire, I don't know which, caught in four or five of the coils below it, and dragging them out of their normal positions, took them bodily into the 'eye' of the coil, and so on out of the tank

and into the trough along which the cable travels to reach the paying-out gear. The mischief was done in a minute, in far less time than it takes to describe, and it was a marvel to all on board that so complicated a knot could be tied in so short a time. It could hardly be called a knot; it was a wondrous entanglement; what would be called in the west of England a 'terrible harl.' You remember last year, when you were sitting in the summer-house (you know where I mean), holding a skein of silk, while a certain 'sweet young thing,' to whom I have alluded before, was trying to wind the aforesaid silk on to a reel, that, either owing to your unsteadiness or clumsiness (of course yours) the silk got into a regular mess, which took the lady and yourself the whole of that afternoon to unravel. If you recollect the above fact (as of course you do not), and if you can call to your mind's eye the appearance presented by that skein of silk, then, and only then, you will have some idea of the 'foul flake,' only you must imagine each thread of silk to be more than an inch in diameter, and nearly as stiff as the kitchen poker.

The instant the mischief occurred the ship was stopped, and the engines were reversed. Mr. Canning and the other chiefs were at the scene of action in a moment. The case looked hopeless, and the first determination was to cut the cable and buoy it till daylight, for, to add to the misfortune, the night was as dark as pitch, and the rain was descending in torrents. I wish we had had one of the Davenport brothers on board to help us out of the difficulty. It was certainly such a knot as no human hands could have tied in so short a time, and it seemed highly probable that no human hands, however dexterous, could have untied it. No one shall ever persuade me that the far-famed 'Gordian' was a 'patch' upon our friend of July 17th. However black our prospects may have looked at one time, they all cleared up after a bit, and this extremely knotty point was solved to the satisfaction and delight of

all. I feel inclined to take liberties with the poet, and say—

'O! Alexander, now no more, let poets tell,
To our Sir Samuel greater praise is due,
For while with patience he untied them well,
The hasty Grecian cut his knots in two (pronounced tue).'

After about half an hour's puzzling and humouring, the mess was kind enough to yield to persuasion, combined with not a little force, and we were enabled, to the unspeakable joy of all, to proceed on our journey as if nothing had happened.

Although the chronicler on board the 'Great Eastern' had nothing to do save to write 'success' day after day; and although, with the single exception mentioned above, nothing in the shape of mishap occurred, yet you can have a very faint idea of the mental strain entailed on those whose lot it is to lay an Atlantic cable. Morn, noon, and night, without a moment's interruption, the drum keeps on revolving, and the noise of the cable is heard rushing along the trough on its way from the tank to the bed of the Atlantic Ocean. It is not pleasant to be aware that any trifling accident might serve to cut the rope in two, and that the failure of any portion of the machinery, or a moment's inattention on the part of any one on duty, might cause a solution of continuity in that 'little bit of string' (as the cable has been facetiously called) which (to put it low) is worth something more than half a million of money.

Everybody who did duty in the tank was compelled, by the rules of the Telegraph Company, to wear a particular dress. This dress was made of canvas, and comprised trousers and jacket in one piece, the whole being made to lace up the back. No pockets were allowed, so that no evil-disposed person or persons could possibly secrete any instruments calculated to do damage to the cable. To this garment there was only one entrance, through the back, and when once the wearer was inside, he found it difficult to get outside again without the assistance of a friend. As these clothes were made rather full round the

waist, 'to allow for the stoop,' they gave a unique, not to say improving, aspect to the figure; and, to add to all, the company provided a pair of boots, not of the most improved shape, made without any nails in the soles, so that the 'shoe-nail' theory of the cause of accidents would be no longer tenable.

There was one personage of note on board, who, by some mishap, has escaped notice in all previous accounts. This was the ship's laureate, a poet of the most refined thought, a perfect Tennyson in his way, who always commemorated the little events of the voyage in a few short lines of poetry, which I should think, for rhythmical elegance, beauty of expression, and regularity of metre, are without a parallel in the whole range of British literature. I will give you a few samples. For instance, when we had passed the spot where the cable parted last year, the poet sang thus—

'The spot is passed, and we are good speed making,
Where we failed last year in our undertaking;
Heaven seems smiling on us, the weather is fair and bright,
There is no defect yet, has the telegram shows any night:
Kind spirit watch over us, and spread your wings as far as you are able,
And grant us to lay our communication cable.'

Again, after the raising of the cable of 1865, he says—

'In the annals of history we all do know
Napoleon and Hannibal led armies through snow;
But show me your records, and I will yield,
Such men as Mr. Samuel Canning and Mr. Cyrus Field,
Who, with willing hearts and minds, and heads and hands was able,
With the help of all on board, to rise, splice, and proceed with the long-lost Atlantic cable.'

These are merely two samples chosen from among nearly fifty specimens. You will kindly observe, as the showman says, that the two last lines of both these stanzas (and this remark holds good for all the others) end respectively in *able* and *cable*, and that as he nears the end of the verse, his Pegasus puts on a spurt and runs clean away with the bit, composed of the rules of prosody, between his teeth.

On Friday, July 27th, we landed the shore end of the cable in Heart's Content harbour, amidst salvos (whatever they may be) and vivas, British cheers, and the firing of cannon. If you will kindly imagine the excitement it will save the trouble of a description. Thus one of the most successful voyages on record was begun and ended on a Friday.

After a fortnight's sojourn at Heart's Content, during which the intervals of work were filled up by innocent amusement, and after we had been visited by governors, bishops, and high potentates of every degree, and had given one or two state feastings, at which everybody congratulated everybody else, and each of the swells of the expedition declared that there never were such nice men in the world as his colleagues, we set sail once more for the purpose of grappling for the lost cable of 1865. I don't suppose that there were ten men in the whole of England and America who really were perfectly sanguine as to the ultimate success of this experiment, and of these ten men, Mr. Canning and Professor Thomson would form one-fifth. Of course, on board the ship we all said 'that the thing was a certainty,' but I don't believe that there were many who, in the private recesses of their own cabins, did not shake their heads and look a little doubtful. Of course I never did such a thing; but then, you know, the exception proves the rule.

We reached our destination (at something and long, something else) on the 12th of August, and on the 13th our grappling-rope was paid out for the first time. There was naturally a good deal of excitement during this first attempt, and a small crowd of people might be seen watching the dynamometer during the whole day. The excitement rather fell when we learnt that we were drifting wrongly, and there was no hope this time. There was a little excitement, however, as the grappling-rope came up. Now was the time to secure the precious ooze of which so much had been heard: and as the last few fathoms of the

rope came over the bows, a small band of naturalists were busy assailing it on all sides. Some were content with merely picking at the rope with a sharp instrument, while the more cunning collected the drippings in basins, with an eye to the preservation of the sediment. This last soon became the popular 'dodge,' and the one most generally adopted on subsequent occasions. It takes about an hour and a half to pay out the two thousand fathoms of grappling-rope, and a similar time to pick it up again when there is nothing on the end. When we had a prize on the grapnel, the latter operation was performed more slowly, and occupied five, six, or even seven hours. Both manoeuvres are effected by means of colossal machinery worked by a 70-horse power engine.

I am not going to describe every separate attempt at grappling at length, as this would only tire without interesting you; nor shall I try to describe the alternations of excitement and despair which at times prevailed on board the ship. That these alternations existed must be evident to all, and I should only fail were I to attempt a description. Some gentleman who was on board last year likened the rise and fall of spirits to the mercury in a barometer, and with his permission (I don't know who it was) I will 'cotton' to the idea. On August 15th we grappled again, and to our great joy the dynamometer told us we had hooked the cable: barometer very high, and continued to rise as the rope was hauled up. While attempting to buoy the cable, after raising it one thousand fathoms from the bottom, a splice 'drew' and we lost it again: barometer very low. On the 17th we actually saw the cable. We began to pick up early in the morning, and by 10.30 the grapnel was above water with the cable of 1865 hanging over its flukes. The strain on the cable was very great, and the enthusiasm on board the ship was tremendous. I never did before, and never expect again, to hear such a cheer as that with which the appearance of our lost friend was greeted. Almost before

the cheering had died away, and before the cable could be secured, it parted and returned again to its ocean bed: barometer very low. We had now learnt two things; first, that the cable could be raised to the surface, and secondly, that the strain on it was too great when raised in a single bight. It must evidently be raised, we now knew, in at least two or, still better, in three bights. The plan was to get two bights partially raised from the bottom, and then the 'Great Eastern' could grapple between these two and bring it to the surface.

On the 19th we grappled, and succeeded in raising a bight one thousand fathoms from the bottom, and buoying it successfully.

We grappled on the 22nd, and twice again on the 25th, but without success on either occasion: barometer awfully low. People began openly to shake their heads and look very wise. This was cheerful. On the 27th the 'Albany' (one of our consort ships) told us that she had brought a bight of the cable to the surface and had buoyed it there. Of course we had nothing to do but to pick up the buoy, splice the cable, and set sail for Heart's Content. We first noticed that this buoy had shifted in the night thirteen miles away from its proper position—something 'fishy' evidently. On picking up the cable which it held we found it to be only a loose piece, two miles in length, and, to crown all, we found that the bight buoy placed on the 19th had broken adrift. The barometer fell with a crash; in fact I wonder the glass was not broken. On the 28th we grappled and failed. On the 29th we shifted our position and went eighty miles to the eastward, where the ground was clear and the water shallower (1900 fathoms).

On the 31st we hooked cable, raised it a thousand fathoms from bottom, and buoyed it. On September 1st the weather was lovely, sky blue, sea calm. By 7.30, P.M., having hooked the cable (about three miles west of bight buoy) we began to haul up.

By 8 the 'Medway' (which had been grappling three miles to west

of 'Great Eastern') signalled that she 'had hooked cable.' We now had the cable in three places, each three miles from the other, exactly what we wanted. Mr. Canning ordered the 'Medway' to 'haul up quick and break cable,' so as to leave us a free end. This order was obeyed and accomplished within a couple of hours, and then the 'Great Eastern' began to pick up her grappling-rope for the last time. By 12.45 the cable appeared above the water, and by 3 A.M. on September 2nd it was firmly secured and the end had been taken to the testing-house. By 3.30 a loud, prolonged, and universal cheer announced that satisfactory signals had been sent to and received from Valentia, and by 6.30 the splice had been made, and we were steaming once more towards Heart's Content: barometer high, and continued so until the end of voyage. It is currently reported, I don't know with how much truth, that when the gentleman on duty at Valentia saw the light on the slide of the galvanometer begin to move, he was so astonished (I suppose he was not even thinking of the cable) that he ran from the room as one possessed, and shouting 'The ship! the ship!' roused the whole house.

We reached Heart's Content on September 8th, and landed the shore end amidst universal enthusiasm. The cheering was immense, and Messrs. Canning, Clifford, and Cyrus Field had to submit to the uncomfortable process of chairing. I never want to be chaired. I don't think that a man shows off to advantage under the circumstances. He looks rather like a two-year old in a 'baby-jumper,' and is sure to struggle with his arms and legs in an exceedingly undignified manner. Your knees get close up to your chin, your head falls between the shoulders, the 'fall' of your back becomes 'bowed,' while the parts beneath the waistcoat assume unto themselves a 'fall.' One hint. If ever you expect to be chaired, have your hair cut, don't wear spectacles, and be sure not to put on a long macintosh and a white wideawake. Such a combination looks comic.

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We sailed from Heart's Content for England on the 9th. All the work was done, and we had now only to pass the time as pleasantly as we could. Captain Anderson displayed his skill as a conjuror and necromancer on one evening, and delighted his audience. For an amateur he is wonderfully clever, and does all the ordinary 'sleight of hand' with cards quite like a professional. Mr. Oliver Smith, the brother of the chief electrician, showed us his power as an electrobiologist, and compelled several of the ship's crew to perform extraordinary feats, making them fight, ring, play at snowballing, or follow him about like cocks and hens at pleasure.

As we were going up the Channel we betook ourselves to our old amusement, the drama. A play was written expressly for the occasion by Messrs. Deane and Poore, entitled 'Contentina; or the Rope, the Grapnel, and the Yankee Doodle!' which, I need hardly say, consisted of a series of songs and hits at the successful voyage. Everything was done in correct style, including the advertising, and we had a regular 'sandwich' parading the deck, carrying a famous sensation poster, concocted by Mr. Dudley. The performance went off with great *éclat*, and applause was liberally awarded. The final song seemed to take the popular mind, and was vigorously redemanded; it was to the air of '95,' and was a sort of history of the successful grappling. As it may interest you I enclose a copy.

CABLE SONG FROM 'CONTENTINA.'

AIR - '95.'

NEPTUNE.—The 'grappling-rope at length has come

Winding slowly round the drum,
And on its end, as I'm alive,
Hangs the rope of '65.

FOR ANDERSON, who guides the ship,
Let's shout and cheer with a hip, hip, hip;
MORIARTY, too, who straight did dive,
At the dear old rope of '65.

CHORUS.—The grappling-rope at length has come

Winding slowly round the drum,
And on its end, as I'm alive,
Hangs the rope of '65.

BETTER.—And let me mention in the song,
The wisecracks who proved us wrong.

G

How with good-will they all let drive
At the unfortunate rope of '65.
They said, 'Twas gone to Davy Jones'—
And its requiem sung in dreary tones—
'That never again it could revive,'
The electric rope of '65.

The grappling-rope at length has come, &c.

CYRUS.—Experience has done the trick,
And solved the question double quick,
What pleasure CANNING must derive,
From a sight of the rope of '65.
Then for him give three ringing cheers,
He has proved the best of engineers,
And with his might did work and strive,
To recover the rope of '65.

The grappling-rope at length has come, &c.

CONTENTINA.—And hurrah for our consort ships
so true,

And Prowse and Barr who helped us too,
And all who worked like bees in a hive,
To gain the rope of '65!
Then hurrah for the tanks that held the coils,
And the grapnel the truant that caught in its
toils,
And the ship whose fortunes will revive,
With the glorious rope of '65.

The grappling-rope at length has come, &c.

On September 20th we landed at
Liverpool, after an absence of three
months, clad with success, and
joyful at returning home. The
people of Liverpool have enter-
tained the cable-layers in a princely
manner, and a liberal Government
has acknowledged their unbounded
services by showering honours on
the leaders of the expedition. Long
life to them all!

When I get my knighthood I will
write and let you know. I don't
think I shall refuse.

Till then please address me as
plain Mr., or at most Esquire. With
every token of esteem,

Believe me,

Very seafaringly yours,

HENRY PLANTAGENET DYNAMOMETER.

'Great Eastern' Steam Ship,
October 1, 1866.

A RHYME FOR JANUARY:

The Gold Sprite.

(ILLUSTRATED BY ALFRED CROWQUILL.)

COME, gather round me, children; come, hearken, girls and boys;
Now cease your silvery laughter, and put away your toys!
Come, sunny little Cissy, and Florry bring as well,
To hear the pretty history that I have got to tell:
Come, children of a larger growth, who've grown too old for rhymes,
For dolls, or hoops, or picture-books, or pretty pantomimes:
Come, bread-and-butter misses, and come, practical papas!
Come, maidens with your lovers; and come, managing mamas;
Come, fair-haired, dimpled Clari, with sweet curly-headed Nell,
And brown-eyed romping Jennie, with that pouting Isabel;
And you, provoking Lizzie, for you're safe the boys to bring—
And are sure to keep them quiet whilst I attempt to sing—
Pray, listen to me, every one, whilst I a tale unfold
Of universal interest, for it is a Tale of Gold!

There lived in a valley a long time ago
A light-hearted Prince, who was handsome, you know;
He was blooming and young, and had not a care,
Save the cut of his coat or the curl of his hair.
Then princes *were* princes, I'm forced to confess,
And dressed not in broadcloth, as other men dress,
But in gorgeous apparel, all jewels and pearls,
In velvet and lace, and with long golden curls.
In garments like this, our good Prince was then clad in,
Just like Marie Wilton when dressed as Aladdin.
With shortest of tunics, and tightest of hose,
And well-shapen legs, which they served to disclose;
With a girdle of jewels worth what? No one knows!
With rosettes and slashings, with buttons and bows.



Drawn by Alfred Crowquill.

THE GOLD SPRITE.

Over all a smart cloak, just to keep off the wet O!
 And a small lethal weapon, now called a stiletto.
 Prince Pippo ruled his kingdom with a light and even hand;
 Beloved he was by every one throughout his happy land.
 He'd ministers so good and true, with officers so leal—
 Who thought less of party questions than of the country's weal.
 Besides, he had no 'Great Unpaid,' to upset every right;
 No 'working men,' no bunkum, and—blest monarch—no John Bright!
 No railways, no revivals, no ritualists and tapers,
 No stock-exchange, no companies, no bubble-banks nor papers!
 In short, no howling grievance he could fix his eye upon
 Except one fearful nuisance, I will tell you of anon.

I can't make it out, but, by chance or mishap,
 This wonderful land is ne'er marked on the map;
 At least in those charts that are published by Wyld
 Or Oruchley, so useful when I was a child;
 But it is to be found in an atlas I know—
 One published by Messrs. Titanis and Co.!

'Twas a land of rich fruits, and of wonderful flowers;
 Of pure silvery streams, and sweet fairy bowers;
 Of rich pastures, gay orchards, and glittering fountains;
 With vineyards and corn fields, and valleys and mountains.

Indeed, like that pictured so cleverly
 Each Christmas-time by Mr. Beverley.

I told you of a nuisance—'tis a thing that's seldom nice—
 And this was what arose to mar the little paradise.
 A river was the nuisance, and I think we all must know
 How a river proved a nuisance—not so very long ago.
 But then we had good engineers, likewise we had our Thwaites,
 And we built the Thames embankment, and we levied some new
 rates.

This stream was strong; it vexed the Prince, its banks would overflow,
 He sent his Board of Works to see—the remedy to know.

The Board of Works they went to look, and dined when there they'd
 been,

And sometimes o'er the job fell out—but oftener they fell in—
 And, it was said, when they fell in, they fished for them in vain;
 Down, down they went, like lumps of lead, and ne'er were seen again!
 Then others went to see the stream, and view the boiling trough;
 It came to pass as they fell in, inhabitants fell off.

Such numbers fell in, it was scarcely surprising
 For Pippo to hear of a general rising!
 Not of subjects wanting some princely concession,
 But water—the cause of the general depression.
 The pastures were flooded, the fields were o'errun;
 Thus 'twas clearly high time that something was done.

The Prince looked on the sodden fields, and mourned the loss of life;
 Then, like a good true husband, he went home and asked his wife.
 The Princess was both young and fair, and Kissme was her name;
 Throughout the land her deeds of good had won her deathless fame.
 'O, darling Kissme,' said the Prince, 'I don't know what to do!
 'O, that I will,' the Princess said, and quickly gave him two!
 'Dearest, 'tisn't *that* I mean,' though he looked by no means vexed;
 'My kingdom's in a fearful state, and I am sore perplexed:
 The water flows at such a rate, that this fair land I see
 A mass of unpaid water-rates it surely soon will be.'

'O, dearest Pippo,' she replied, as round him stole her hand,
 'Take my advice, a "progress" make throughout your flooded land.
 Now, you know, 'tis quite the thing, receiving clerks' orations
 On parchment, with the grammar of civic corporations!

But go not thus, in regal state, or perhaps you might be bored;
So take your Kissme's sage advice, and take your magic sword.
Set forth alone and meet the ill, though, dearest, I shall cry;
Let it be yours, and yours alone, to conquer or to die.'

Pippo took her advice, and the very next day
Reached the bank where Pactolus was brawling away:
As he stood there, and mused o'er the swift yellow stream,
He noticed beneath it a glitter and gleam;
And just where the current seemed almost satanic,
Was a bright yellow peak which looked quite volcanic:
It rose higher and higher, then served to disclose
First some great yellow ears, then a yellower nose;
Round green goggle eyes, with a mouth so fierce and old,
And rows of saw-like teeth, all set in gums of gold.
A more hideous phiz has ne'er, to my thinkin',
Been made at Old Drury, by dear old Dykwynekyn.

Said the monster, 'I'm Sprite of Gold!
I am the friend of young and old—
The great and wealthy—brave and bold—
And I do give them wealth untold.
I mock the famished, chill the cold;
For me fair women's hearts are sold,
Brave men are laid beneath the mould.
Ha! ha!! Ha! ha!! The Sprite of Gold!

The Prince started back, saying, 'What an impertinent fellow!
I never, no never, saw any one done so uncommonly yellow.
Pray, my noisy, bilious friend, with the rubicund hair,
Have you the remotest idea that you're trespassing there?'

'Oh, come with me, good Prince,' said the Sprite;
'I'll show thee a glimpse of gold so bright,
With just a taste of the golden gleam,
So dive to my kingdom 'neath the stream.
Come, then! Come, then! O, come to my fold!
Bow down and worship the Sprite of Gold!

'I love the golden sunshine,' said the Prince, 'at early dawn,
And like the mellow yellow on the newly-ripened corn;
I prize the threads of golden hue amidst dear Kissme's hair,
But I hate the gold that glitters bright, my people to ensnare—
That stained with blood so redly, and deeply dyed with shame,
That can barter manhood's honour, and purchase woman's fame!
With that he drew his magic sword, and flung it o'er the stream,
Quite straight into the Gold Sprite's heart, who gave an awful scream;
He gave a groan, a fearful yell; he disappeared, and then—
My story's told—the Golden Fiend was never seen again!
The stream sank quickly, till at last 'twas nought but yellow sand,
Whilst peace and plenty reigned once more throughout the happy land.
A thousand years since this occurred, some travellers, I'm told,
Were walking o'er a desert land, and found great lumps of gold;
Some nuggets were of human form, in which the likeness lurks
Of Such-a-one, and So-and-so, in Pippo's Board of Works.
Why, Cissy! Flo! You're fast asleep! Come, kiss me both, my loves;
I wish you'd been the older girls, then I'd have had some gloves.

J. ASHBY STERRY.



SKETCHES OF THE ENGLISH BENCH AND BAR.

I.

INTRODUCTORY AND EXPLANATORY PROGRAMME.

Sir A. Cockburn and Lord Chelmsford.



SIR ALEXANDER COCKBURN.

ON a recent occasion, when we were giving some fancy sketches of varieties of the Bar, we hinted that we might possibly, at some future period, present some reminiscences and portraiture of real persons, members of that prominent and distinguished profession. Pro-

bably the leading men at the Bar stand out more constantly and conspicuously before the eyes of their fellow-countrymen than any other; and they certainly play a most important part, either in the common affairs of life, or in the government of the country. Therefore, on the





[From a Photograph by Maull and Polyblank.]

LORD CHELMSFORD

[See "Sketches of the English House and Bar."

one hand, lifelike portraiture and remembrances of such men are likely to be of great general interest; and, on the other hand, their truthfulness can be tested by the personal knowledge or recollection of large numbers of our readers. And all the more so, as the pencil has been brought to the aid of the pen, and it may thus be seen how far the features reflect the character, or the character illustrates the features. Neither the pen nor the pencil will suffice, by itself, to portray the man as he is, as he speaks, as he impresses himself upon those who see and hear him. The features alone do not show the character; still less the portraiture of them, which is fixed, and loses all the play of moving, changing expression. And then there is the voice—the utterance, the tone,—what character there is in that! And the action, the manner, the gesture,—all going to make up the man, as he is daily heard, and seen, and listened to. Then there is the intellectual portraiture of the man; the cast of his mind; the character of his ideas; the general tone and colour of his thoughts; the nature and quality of his oratory and style of speaking—whether it is witty, or imaginative, or humorous, or eloquent, or sarcastic, and so forth: all this is lost to the pencil, or can only be guessed at from its works; but it is all open to the pen.

On the other hand, the pen without the pencil only gives you a portraiture in words, not form and feature; and after all, there is a natural desire to look upon the features of illustrious men; to scan their countenances, and fancy that you read their character: and if you don't, why that is itself a feature in their character—that their features should *not* reflect it. Few, for instance, would guess Lord Westbury's character from his features; no one would detect, under that bland, benevolent countenance, the capacity for cold crushing sarcasm, absolutely unimaginable and indescribable, except by describing his tone and utterance—so calm, so smooth, so sweet in its intonations; so *like* his portrait; but uttering all

the while such cold, contemptuous sarcasms—so *unlike* his portrait. Here we have an instance of the necessity of having both pen and pencil to give good portraiture of a remarkable character; and see how they aid each other to depict it.

This leads us to an observation explanatory of our plan of selection, and introductory to our programme. We propose to portray remarkable characters; and, therefore, our sketches are necessarily limited to men of such characters. Limited they must be; and this is the natural limit; for it must be the plan of our selection in such a work as this. Ours is not a legal publication, and we have nothing to do with mere professional eminence or reputation, apart from something in the character which requires or deserves a portraiture; otherwise we should have to fill our numbers with a mere record of professional reputations, with nothing in them of general interest.

Men who hold the foremost rank and the highest station in the profession, indeed, are pretty certain to have *character*, which is worth portraiture; but not always or necessarily so: and it is possible to have a large practice, and be making enormous wealth, and yet be a very ordinary man, and have no character worth portraying. And it really is remarkable, when one sits down to the work, to find how few there are, on the Bench or at the Bar, who are worth describing: that is, whose character affords material for a sketch of any *general*, as apart from mere professional, interest.

This being the principle of our general selection, a few words about our particular choice, our grouping, and our programme.

The object of these sketches, as already has been indicated, is not professional, but general interest; and that not merely in the sense of the interest which may naturally be taken in the characters of the leading men in the most influential profession, but the still more general interest which may arise from the delineation of the character of emi-

ment men, both by the pencil and the pen, by a sort of union of the art of physiognomy and the science of moral philosophy. We are not aware of any systematic attempt to delineate and describe the characters of any number of eminent men by the portraiture both of the pencil and the pen; by graphic delineation as well as by written description; by sketches of their features as well as of their character; by making the countenance and the disposition naturally illustrate each other; by making them correct each other's fallacies and amend each other's mistakes. It is not always, or absolutely, that physiognomy reflects a man's known or actual character. It no doubt reflects the original natural disposition, but it does not always reveal, in an equal degree, an acquired or habitual character, which in many men is a kind of second nature. On the other hand, where the physiognomy does reflect the actual character, the written description often falls short of an effective impression of the man—the living, breathing man—as he lives, acts, speaks, moves.

And the defect or deficiency is in the ratio of the degree to which genius or intellect may adorn a character, or irradiate a countenance. It is hard enough, even for the artist, to catch the lightning glance—the evanescent grace—of the expression; but more hopeless it is for the mere writer, unaided, to attempt it.

It is because the writer is more aided by the artist, the photographer, or the painter, or the engraver, to an extent to which he never was before, that therefore we can essay the combination of their respective gifts and powers for the illustration and delineation of the features and characters of the most eminent men in the most eminent profession. All of them, more or less, and in the degree to which they are eminent, illustrate the advantage of this combination; and it is peculiarly illustrated in the first of our series, Sir Alexander Cockburn. Glance at his portrait, and say if mere written description could give an adequate idea of him.

On the other hand, read the written description, and say if you could find it all beforehand in the portrait, though it may be that, when you know it, you can fancy you can see its verity in the likeness of his countenance. At all events, you can the more easily imagine it to be true. On the other hand, the countenance of Sir Richard Bethell, Lord Westbury, might easily mislead us. In truth, you would never, from its expression alone, imagine what the man really is; you could not realize the voice, the utterance, the tone, the manner—all that make up character. In some respects this is so, necessarily, in all portraits, however lifelike. They are silent and motionless; and so much of character is in the voice and manner. Hence it is that, looking at portraits of women who have enslaved the heroes of the world—Gabrielle d'Estrees, for instance,—you cannot divine the secret of their influence, the magic of their spell. No doubt the secret was in their voice; the magic was in their manner, their expression, their tone, their nameless gifts, and graces, and charms—too subtle for the painter to fix, or the engraver to portray; and so they were soon lost to memory, and are only enshrined in fancy. So of eminent men. In vain you look only at their portraits to get an idea of them; you must have some description of them, as well as a pictorial representation: for what but words can describe the voice, the tone, the utterance, the manner, the numerous nameless things which reveal character?

We have chosen, first, the most remarkable of the heads of the profession, from among the law lords and the judges at law or in equity; and then we proceed to the most distinguished and remarkable advocates, either at the Bar, either in the courts of common law or equity. We have grouped together as much as possible men who are, or have been, constantly thrown together in public life, either on the Bench or at the Bar; and this for several reasons: first, because they are, or have been, really and personally so much together, and then because,

generally, there are traits of resemblance or of contrast, which mutually illustrate each other. Thus we commence with the Lord Chief Justice of England (Sir A. Cockburn), and the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chelmsford: who (as Sir F. Thesiger) was, when they two were at the head of the common law Bar, his great professional rival and competitor. Next come the late Lord Chancellor, Lord Westbury, and that venerable and remarkable man, Lord Justice Knight Bruce, who were so long the two most distinguished men in the Court of Chancery, and resembled each other in rich intellectual endowments, and in that gift of caustic sarcasm which more than once brought them into collision. Then will come a group of grave and reverend men, for half a century contemporaries and competitors for forensic fame, and now coadjutors in judicial honours: Lord Chief Justice Erle, the late Lord Chief Baron, Sir Frederick Pollock, and the present Lord Chief Baron, Sir Fitzroy Kelly. Next comes the Chief Judge of a court of the deepest interest to our lady readers—Sir James Wilde, judge of the Divorce and Matrimonial Court, with whom we shall associate the judge who was once named to succeed him, and who is not more remarkable for his learning than for chivalrous feeling for the fairer and softer sex, Mr. Justice Willes. Then come a group of judges of singularly racy, vigorous, and original character: Mr. Baron Martin, Mr. Baron Bramwell, and Mr. Justice Blackburne. Then come Mr. Justice Shee, who, when raised to the Bench, was the foremost orator of the Bar, and his old antagonist and friend—the most wonderful instance of energy and earnestness at the Bar, since Sir Thomas Wilde left it—Mr. Montagu Chambers. Then we come to the heads of the Bar, and its most accomplished orators, who happen to be advocates in the Chancery courts: the late Attorney-General (Sir Roundell Palmer), Sir Hugh Cairns, and Mr. Rolt, the late Lord Advocate, and the Queen's Advocate. Then we come to the foremost advocates at the common-law

Bar: Mr. E. James, and Sir W. Bovill, Mr. Coleridge, and Mr. Karlake, who are now constantly seen opposed to each other, and have gone all through their career together, and are a striking contrast to each other. Then come a group of the wits and humorists of the Bar: Mr. Giffard, Mr. Sergeant Hayes, Mr. Joseph Brown, and Mr. Thomas Jones—or 'Tom Jones,' as he is familiarly called in Westminster Hall and on the Great Northern Circuit, all through which he is well known by that familiar cognomen. Lastly, come a group of what we may call the 'Sporting Bar,' meaning by that, not sporting men (though they are fond of sport), but men certain to be engaged in what the Bar call 'sporting cases': Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Huddleston, Mr. Sergeant Ballantine, Mr. Sergeant Parry—all well-known and remarkable characters, whose names are daily seen in the newspapers. Such is our programme: and now we may fitly commence with—

THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE OF ENGLAND.

When Sir Alexander Cockburn was made Lord Chief Justice, a few years ago, he was the most perfect and finished advocate at the Bar; and he is now, beyond all comparison, the most able and accomplished judge upon the Bench; so that, in every sense—in ability as in rank—he is the acknowledged head of the profession. You can see at once that he is a man of intellect and spirit. The lofty brow, the clear, generous eyes, the frank, quick, bright countenance—all, at first sight, even through the imperfect medium of a likeness, are attractive and prepossessing. They give, in short, the true impression of the man: the idea of a man of genius—of warm and generous heart. A poet has drawn his portrait in a line—

'Genius is written on his broad, clear, brow.'

You will not see a finer face in Westminster Hall. The other day a thoughtful young barrister came into court, and after sitting for a few minutes looking at him, turned

round and said to the writer, 'What a noble countenance!' It was the natural, spontaneous tribute of the moment, and it was as good a portraiture as words could give. It is indeed a noble countenance. It is the reflection of a clear intellect, which has been finely educated, and nobly exercised. It is open, candid, and engaging in its expression; it has a singular brightness and clearness, at the same time a calmness of look, the result of a conscious intellectual power. It gives the idea at once of a great intellect in repose—like the stillness of a deep yet clear sea, its surface brightened by the sun, and its depths as clear as crystal. His voice is like his countenance—it is frank, bright, clear, and lively. His utterance is easy, natural, and unstudied; his manner ever genial and graceful: he is habitually grave and thoughtful, but always thoroughly unaffected, and ready to be pleasant and playful in a moment. His demeanour has a happy union of dignity and grace. This comes of good blood and high breeding: he is of an ancient family, was highly educated, and has always moved in the best society: hence his manners have an exquisite tact, and a tone of delicate and refined courtesy; and, in short, he is—as becomes the Lord Chief Justice of England—the best-bred man upon the Bench. And those delightful manners—that exquisite politeness, that charming ease and grace, that genial spirit—which have made him so charming in society, have made him the favourite of the Bar. The Court of Queen's Bench, under his presidency, has been thus described in half-a-dozen lines, which well portray his judicial character and demeanour:—

'And I have seen a court where every man
Felt himself in the presence of a gentleman;
Whose genial courtesy made all things genial,
Whose exquisite bearing captiv'd all men's
love;
Whose sun-bright justice brightened every
cause,
And sent even him who lost away content.*

This is a perfect portraiture, drawn by one who is both an advocate and a poet.

* Kenealey's Poems.

Sir Alexander is admired by the Bar; and well he *may* be, for he is the ideal of a judge. You can see it all in his countenance, if you gaze upon him as he sits upon the Bench. His whole aspect gives the idea of a great intellect calm and quiet under the influence of a judicial spirit. He looks the very embodiment of Justice—calm, unimpassioned, and serene. His demeanour on the Bench is remarkable for its calmness, and its easy, unconscious air of power and self-possession, which nothing, even for an instant, ruffles or disturbs. No weight of difficulty seems to oppress him; no multiplicity of details to perplex or confuse; no elements of excitement to disturb him: he has always that ease, that calmness of tone and manner which are so great a judicial gift, and are the undoubted marks of a great intellect. There has never been, in living memory, one who has achieved so rapidly so high a reputation as a great judge. Even while he was at the Bar he was marked by qualities which showed him highly qualified for the Bench. He showed a singular union of genius and judgment; his most brilliant gifts were under the guidance of good sense, and his very eloquence, as an advocate, had in it not only consummate forensic skill but something of judicial spirit. His style was copious, but never diffuse or verbose; he was never carried away (so to speak) by his eloquence: he never seemed to say a word too much. His choice of words was always remarkably correct, and his diction was as perfect as his elocution. His delivery was always marked with propriety, dignity, and good taste. Even in his outbursts of feeling he was never betrayed into any extravagance of sentiment. His eloquence was always real and genuine, and the offspring of his generous nature; he has brought it to the Bench, and often displays it there. The bright gift often flashes out even amidst the enforced calmness of judicial duty. To listen to a summing up of his in a great case is a lofty treat—a great intellectual delight. As a judge, he is perfect: he unites every judicial gift with every judicial grace.

As Sir Alexander Cockburn, before his elevation to the Bench, had been in his youth a man of gaiety and gallantry, and in his maturer age had been a politician and a brilliant parliamentary orator, it was not supposed that he would make a very superior Chief Justice, and the profession were not predisposed to think so highly of his acquirements as a lawyer, as of his gifts as an orator. But they overlooked the advantages of genius and intellect, and underrated the power they give a man to acquire speedily the principles of a science which, once mastered, is perfectly easy to men of pre-eminent ability. They also underrated the strength of the stimulant supplied by a keen sense of honour and a sensitive feeling of duty. Sir Alexander had a first-rate capacity for law: the clear intellect, the comprehensive mind, the logical habit of thought, the candid and considerate disposition, the mental faculties—at once brilliant and well-disciplined, cultivated and exercised—all these were brought to bear upon the subject which came before him with the most patient attention and persevering exertion; and the result was that, after a few years, during which he grew wonderfully in the estimation of the Bar, he acquired a very high judicial reputation, and has been spoken of in the House of Commons as one of the ablest Chief Justices that ever sat in Westminster Hall. Probably there never was a more remarkable and more rapid rise of a judicial reputation. Sir Alexander has this among his many great gifts—a power of prompt and ready expression in the most correct and copious diction. Hence he has always been distinguished by his judgment on charges which, although delivered off-hand, have long been distinguished for their marked and superior ability. It has become a common saying in Westminster Hall that, give the Lord Chief Justice time to make himself master of a case, and no one so clearly marshals and arranges the most complicated facts, or more lucidly applies the legal principles involved.

He soon became so remarkable for

this that *causes célèbres* were carried into his court for the purpose of securing a trial before him, and his summings-up in such cases have been regarded as most masterly and luminous judicial compositions; while, at times, the beauty of his sentiments and the eloquence of his language have elicited involuntary outbreaks of applause, and have startled the cold stillness of courts of law with the sound of the homage paid to genius and eloquence. Nor has this been so only in his summings-up; it has ever been so in judgments strictly legal. Never since the time of Lord Mansfield has there been a Chief Justice whose genius has had greater power to give a charm even to the exposition and application of legal principles by clear diction and a luminous style. This was exemplified, in a remarkable manner, in his judgment, when Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, in the great Shrewsbury case. After a protracted argument, which had taxed to the utmost the ablest counsel at the Bar, including the then Attorney-General, Sir R. Bethell, the Lord Chief Justice at once pronounced an elaborate and luminous judgment, so admirable in its diction that it might sometimes be called eloquent, but which, at all events, was a judicial masterpiece, and a perfect triumph of intellectual power. It excited the jealousy of Sir R. Bethell to such a degree that, when arguing against it in the Court of Error (where it was confirmed), he took occasion to sneer at it thus: 'These principles, my lord (he said), are not to be set aside by an eloquent judgment delivered in popular language.' This sneer, bitter as it was, contained the best tribute to the wonderful judgment against which it was aimed, for it was eloquent, and it *did* render a most difficult and complicated case quite clear, by putting it into 'popular language.' And this is the great characteristic of Sir Alexander Cockburn's judicial style. It is eminently lucid and luminous, and excels in making difficult subjects clear, even to the popular mind. Perhaps his best eulogy might be given in the words of a lady, who said, 'I don't know

how it is, but I always seem to understand Sir Alexander Cockburn's cases; he makes them seem so clear to me.'

Since he has become Lord Chief Justice of England he has tried a series of most remarkable cases, and his manner of trying them has obtained him a brilliant judicial reputation. In every instance, even although against popular prejudice, he has led the jury to the verdict which justice appeared to require; and this has often demanded and displayed consummate ability and surpassing skill.

It is an intellectual treat of the highest order to see Sir Alexander try a great case. Such clearness of mind—such calm, easy self-possession—such comprehensive memory—such logical arrangement of facts—such correct and acute appreciation of their force—such power of expression—such correct and copious diction—all forming a combination of judicial excellencies delightful to see displayed; while throughout there is the indescribable charm and ease and grace of manner, and the spirit of exquisite courtesy which adorn the seat of justice, and form the highest ornament of the judicial dignity. Never was that high office of Lord Chief Justice of England more worthily filled than it is now by a man who unites the clear intellect of Mansfield with the dignity of Denman, and blends with them a grace, a courtesy, and genius all his own.

It would, indeed, be an exaggeration to say that Sir Alexander Cockburn's mental or judicial character was perfection. There are flaws in every character; and the utmost that the most ardent admirer of Sir Alexander could say would be that he was as near to perfection as possible.

Since Sir Alexander Cockburn became Lord Chief Justice of England, his remarkable judicial abilities have been developed and displayed in the trial of many causes of such great and general interest as to attract public attention to an extraordinary degree; and the result has been to excite public admiration very strongly, and establish his superiority as a *Nisi Prius* judge.

Such was the case, for instance, with the action by Colonel Dickson against General Peel, the Earl of Wilton, and Lord Combermere, which took eight days in its trial, and ended in a result quite in accordance with the general opinion, though different from that which had attended a former trial, of a similar action arising out of the same case before Lord Campbell, the late Lord Chief Justice. On that occasion, those who had attended both trials were struck with the superiority of the present Lord Chief Justice over his predecessor in the manner in which he dealt with the case. Indeed, Sir Alexander Cockburn's judicial style is perfect, and his mode of trying a really great case is something admirable. His calm judicial spirit and tone throughout—his thorough freedom from all prejudice or bias—and painstaking patience of investigation—his entire reservation of his opinion until the close of the case—his masterly ability in summing it up to the jury—his grasp and mastery of the facts, however numerous and complicated—his clear and careful arrangement of them—his judicial manner of dealing with them—his convincing way of putting them in their true light—his variety, lucidity, and often beauty of expression; and all through, the charm and grace of his manner—his good-humour and good-temper—his easy, well-bred tone of speaking—all constitute the perfection of judicial style, and fairly realize and satisfy the ideal of a great judge engaged in the trial of a great case. It is really an intellectual treat, and a high gratification at once to the sense of justice, the love of truth, and the perception of genius, eloquence, and intellect.

The recent Matlock will case was another illustration. That, also, was a monster trial, a *cause célèbre*; and no one who heard will ever forget that wonderful and admirable summing-up. The case was a remarkable illustration of Sir Alexander Cockburn's immense superiority as a *Nisi Prius* judge: for it had been already tried before the other two chiefs; first, before Lord Chief Justice Erle, and then before Fred-

erick Pollock, the Lord Chief Baron. Unfortunately, at the first trial, the jury went wrong, and found in *favour* of the forged will. On the trial before Sir F. Pollock, his great experience enabled him to see where the truth lay, and under his guidance the jury found a verdict *against* the forged will and codicils; but then the House of Lords were not satisfied with the way he put the case, and so there was another—a third—trial ordered before the Lord Chief Justice of England. Perhaps there never was, therefore, a fairer trial of judicial skill in a greater case.

It involved the right to large estates, and it raised the terrible issues of forgery, perjury, and subornation of perjury; for two witnesses in a respectable position swore they attested the codicils declared to have been forged. There was an enormous mass of evidence; and, what was worse, it was so contradictory that it was extremely difficult to get at the truth, and still more so to get the jury to perceive it. But it was now tried before a master, both of forensic and judicial skill; before one who, while at the Bar, had been in many great will cases, and whose mind was eminently clear and capacious—a judge of whom one of the advocates said, 'There sits on the Bench one who, as an advocate, has often displayed his great powers in causes of this magnitude, and who would now throw upon it the light of his clear and practised intellect.' And he did so in a summing-up of several hours, in which the evidence was arranged and analyzed with such acuteness and such skill, and left not the shadow of doubt on the mind of any one who heard it, that the will and codicils had been forged. He had to deal with the difficulty the jury would naturally feel in convicting several persons in a most respectable position in life of such foul crimes. He did not shrink from it: he put it boldly before them at the very outset, and all through. 'It is impossible to shrink from dealing with the case as one which involves a charge of conspiracy to commit fraud, forgery, and perjury. * * * And no doubt the

presumption must be in favour of innocence, and more especially in the instance of persons of respectable character. But, on the other hand, suppose those persons were here on their trial for conspiracy, and that the evidence led you to the conclusion that they were guilty, what effect would their former character have upon you? It might make you pause and hesitate before you came to the conclusion of their guilt; but in the evidence satisfied you of it, then the character they had previously been able to maintain would not prevent you from pronouncing it by your verdict now; or if the evidence here leads you to the same conclusion, then, however painful may be the discharge of your duty, you must not shrink from it any the more than if these persons were arraigned before you criminally. * * * It is true, no doubt, that poor men may have a high sense of honour and integrity, but, as we know, poverty exposes men to temptation. The great master of human nature represents one of his characters saying, "My poverty, but not my will, consents." And it is undoubtedly true that sometimes a man who, beyond the reach of want, would not swerve from rectitude, is led away by temptation under the pressure of necessity. Start, if you please, with the presumption that men who up to a certain time have maintained an untarnished character are not likely to enter into a nefarious conspiracy to commit forgery and perjury. But you must not carry that too far. And if the evidence satisfies you that there was a forgery, and that these men were parties to it, you must not shrink from saying so by your verdict merely from the notion that it is impossible that such men should be guilty of such crimes.'

This passage is a very good illustration of Sir Alexander Cockburn's judicial style—the union of a clear, calm, reflective intellect with great knowledge of the world and singular felicity of expression and happiness of elucidation or illustration. The result in this case was decisive. The jury, without difficulty, returned a verdict approving the for-

gery of the will, and the Court of Chancery and the House of Lords were at last satisfied, and declined to disturb the verdict.

So in another and more recent case. This also was a *cause célèbre*, and had a ten days' trial; and it raised a painful, a delicate, and difficult issue, or, rather, was complicated with several issues of that character, for it was a case in which a husband had sued his wife for a divorce, and she had sued him for a separation; and he had failed and she had succeeded; and he now sued his attorney for losing on his side. The Lord Chief Justice, after hearing the whole of the evidence, wished, as most of those who heard it did, to save at once the lady, the husband, and the attorney. The young lady herself had been examined, and many of her letters read, and had inspired much sympathy; the attorney was a most respectable man, and had done his best; and, on the other hand, the husband was a young officer, who, if he did not clear his character, would be ruined at the very outset of his career in life. The object was to save all three; and any one can see in a moment that it was an object in which it was easy to feel a sympathy, but which, at the same time, was embarrassed with the most awkward difficulty; the more so, because husband and wife were still most hostile to each other. The husband did his utmost to make her out guilty, and to throw blame upon the attorney for not having succeeded in making her out so in the Divorce Court, and for having, indeed, settled her suit after failing in his. Here, then, was a task requiring the most exquisite skill and delicacy. And no one could hear without unbounded admiration the summing-up of the Lord Justice, which, though it occupied six hours in its delivery, was yet listened to not only without weariness, but with pleased attention, and with hardly any sense of the lapse of time, until the last. It embraced and arranged in the most masterly manner the immense mass of evidence, both of facts and of letters, which had been brought before the court, and

pointed out, in the most clear, acute, and convincing way, their bearing on the various and complicated issues raised in that extraordinary case; and which, with wonderful skill, brought a jury, who were confused and divided by opposite prejudices, in the result, to the right result.

In the opinion of persons of experience who heard that case, that summing-up was the most remarkable instance of judicial ability and skill ever witnessed within living memory. The difficulty was this: that by certain circumstances such strong feelings had been excited about the case that it was perfectly plain, from the demeanour of the jury, that, as it turned out, they were pretty equally divided in their view of it, and that while one half were for giving a verdict for the plaintiff, with large damages, which would have been deemed a grievous wrong to the defendant, the other half were for giving a verdict in favour of the defendant, which, it was thought, would destroy the character of the plaintiff, who had brought the action mainly to restore his character, and did not care, he professed, for damages, if that object was attained. The Lord Chief Justice desired to restore his character, being of opinion that the case against him was not supported; and, on the other hand, desired to protect the defendant from an adverse verdict, lest it should inflict on his professional reputation a wound which it was universally considered had not been deserved. He had, therefore, to lead both sections of the jury, which were bent upon going wrong in opposite directions, to a middle line, which would be the line of truth and justice, and unite them both in a fair and equitable verdict. This he did with consummate skill, by depicting on the one hand the improbability of such youthful depravity as would be involved in the theory either that the plaintiff's wife had been guilty, or that the plaintiff was guilty of wilfully bringing a false accusation of guilt against her; and he brought all his experience of the world, and all his moving eloquence, to ward off both conclu-

sions, and to guide to the conclusion that the suit between the plaintiff and his wife had arisen from unfortunate misunderstandings and mistakes, and that circumstances and appearances were unhappily so much against both parties, that the present defendant, the attorney, was not to blame for not being able to see through the case; so that the jury could find that neither the plaintiff nor his wife was guilty, and that the defendant was not to blame. And this the jury accordingly did—expressly and in terms—find, although, it is true, they afterwards—not very creditably—so far altered their finding as to give a verdict for the plaintiff, with nominal damages. That was, of course, inconsistent with their express finding, that the defendant was not to blame, and it came, in substance, to the same result; so that both parties were saved, and neither of them ruined by the trial, as one or the other must have been by a different verdict.

We repeat, that persons of much experience who heard that case declared it the most wonderful triumph of judicial skill that had ever been witnessed within their memory. And it is difficult to convey an idea of the union of masterly skill and of moving eloquence which characterized the charge throughout. The touching passage, for instance, in which, arguing against the young lady's guilt, he dwelt upon the proof afforded by her letters that she was beyond all doubt attached to her husband, whom she had just married; and urged that it was too much for human nature to believe, that a young girl, at the very time she is absorbed with love for one man she is about to marry, would suffer herself to be seduced by another, 'or ere those shoes were old in which she had wandered with him fondly over those Welsh hills!' The whole passage was full of beauty, and betrayed at once a thorough knowledge of the human heart, a wonderful power of close and sustained thought, and a perfect mastery of language and command of expression.

Most of our readers will probably remember reading in the columns of the 'Times' during the last few years summings-up of the Lord Chief Justice in remarkable cases, and will recal how they have been struck with the clearness of expression and the justness of thought which characterized them; but no one who has not heard one of them can form an idea of the pure, dispassionate, and thoughtful tone which pervades them, the beauty of elocution, the grand dignity of delivery. This combination of judicial gifts and graces make Sir Alexander Cockburn a most consummate Nisi Prius judge, perhaps the finest that has been seen during our own times upon the Bench. It is a fine intellectual treat of the highest order to hear him sum-up a great case; and beyond all doubt, take him all in all, he is, as the Lord Chief Justice of England ought to be, the most gifted judge in Westminster Hall.

From him we pass naturally to his old forensic competitor, the late Sir F. Thesiger, now Lord Chancellor.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR, LORD CHELMSFORD.

We group with Sir Alexander Cockburn one who for many years was constantly his forensic rival and political opponent, but always, in private, his intimate friend, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chelmsford, once so well known as Sir F. Thesiger. There are points of resemblance and of contrast between the two men. Lord Chelmsford is taller than Sir Alexander, and has firmer, keener, and more determined features; and a dark, hawk-like eye, instead of Sir Alexander's mild, clear, kindly-looking blue eyes (although they are keen too, but not in the same way—rather clear than keen); but, like Sir Alexander, he has always moved in the very highest society, and his manners have that courtly air and tone of high breeding which have been described as distinguishing Sir Alexander. Lord Chelmsford is a tall, fine, handsome, stately-looking man, and though now of considerable age, fast verging towards seventy, still

carries himself loftily and proudly, and has a remarkable mixture of the tone of the courtier and the lawyer. You will rarely see a man so courtly and so keen. There is this great distinction between him and Sir Alexander, that he is not nearly so genial as Sir Alexander, and he has a tone of sarcasm in his voice even when most studiously courteous. His very jests or stories—and he is full of them—are sarcastic, and he is in this respect like Sir Alexander, that he is singularly happy in retort or repartee. But then, unlike Sir Alexander, his retorts are generally not only witty but sarcastic, and have not Sir Alexander's genial tone in them. He has, in fact, altogether a colder and more severe cast of character than that of Sir Alexander. This gave him apparently greater power in cross-examination. It was difficult, however, to say which of the two was most successful, such was the great skill, the delicate tact of Sir Alexander, who was marvellously acute and adroit. They have in former days fought many a great forensic fight together, and it was a fine thing to see two such advocates engaged in contest, perhaps for great estates, as in the Swinfen case, which, we believe, was pretty nearly the last in which they were

engaged. But the most remarkable case in which Sir F. Thesiger was engaged was the memorable case of the horse-dealer and forger, Provis, who, sixteen or seventeen years ago, set up a claim as the heir to large estates in Gloucestershire. Those who were present still describe, and will never forget, the cross-examination of the miscreant by Sir F. Thesiger during great part of two days, until, at last, he all but fainted in the box, and fairly gave up. He was at once committed for forgery, and destroyed himself in gaol. There was terrible power in Sir Frederick's cross-examination, as any one can well imagine who hears him speak now, even in familiar conversation. Such sarcastic suavity; such mocking irony; such a lofty air; such insidious, expressive emphasis of tone; such bitter pungency of comment or retort—there were few who could come unscathed out of such a searching, scathing ordeal. You can see a good deal of this in his features—a keen, hawk-eyed man, with acute look, and searching glance, and imposing aspect. Such was the only man at the Bar thought fit to combat with Sir Alexander, and Sir Alexander was the only man at the Bar thought fit to cope with him.



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SOMETHING ABOUT BREAKFAST.

IT has often been asserted that as long as human beings congregate together like wild beasts at 'feeding times,' this age has no right to lay claim to superior civilization, and that it would be an improved manner of life if relays of food could be brought to some particular place at stated times, to which any who chose might resort,

As it is an acknowledged fact, that society and conversation are the best promoters of digestion, the plan that these capacious people propose would be both unwholesome and unsocial, but it might be advantageously acted upon in the matter of breakfast, for that, as English people ordain it, is decidedly a mistake.

'Breakfast is such a charmingly social meal,' we heard a lady once say in speaking of a large breakfast in a country-house, 'every one comes down so fresh, everybody is in time, and ready for the duties and pleasures of the day. I consider it a delightful moment.' It was a sentimental and poetical view, but as far as possible removed from the truth; for in our estimation it is a peculiarly unhappy moment, and one in which many persons are prone to regard their fellow-creatures as their natural enemies.

When people are hungry and cold it follows as a matter of course that they are cross, and as large parties in country-houses usually occur in the winter, this is tolerably sure to be the case. Shy people, too, are always shy in the morning; they cannot take up life where they left it the night before, or say 'Good-morning' at all in the same happy

and friendly spirit in which they said 'Good-night.'

People are not ready for social intercourse till they have been up at least three hours. It is quite curious to see how disagreeable really good-humoured people often are before breakfast. They are often conscious of their moroseness, and try to conceal it by utter silence or cynical smiles; but with all their endeavours we are aware that it would be a service of danger to speak to them, and whether it be our most valued friend, or simply a highly agreeable or intellectual acquaintance, we equally hope that it may never be our fate to meet him again at breakfast. Surely it would be a great advantage to the world if these individuals breakfasted alone!

Perhaps the most depressing thing we can meet with is anything like hilarity or even great cheerfulness so early in the day. Few things are more trying than the jovial, hearty manner in which the master of the house often enters the room where his guests are assembled in the morning. If in winter, with blue nose and red hands, loud in his praise of the weather (which to our thinking is simply detestable), advising every one to follow his example and take a turn before breakfast: 'Sharpens the appetite; freshens one up; does a world of good.' Take a turn before breakfast that raw January day! you cannot even reply except by drawing closer to the fire, and looking with horror at the freezing fog through the window. You sit down to breakfast to endure another trial from your

well-meaning host, he being one of those who invariably make a programme of the day for other people, totally regardless of the fact that what people may like to do at two o'clock they dislike at ten, and *vice versa*. But all this goes for nothing with your cheerful friend. He usually calls to his wife, who is absorbed in a tea-pot at the farthest end of the table, 'Well, my dear, and what have you arranged for our friends to do to-day?' There is a murmured response to the effect that no one wishes to do anything. 'It is so very cold to-day,' Mrs. — replies, languidly.

'Cold! not at all; that is so like you ladies, who never take any exercise, and do nothing to promote circulation; then you say it is cold! It is a fine, healthy, seasonable day; no sign of rain or snow. A day like this in January must not be wasted. Come, what will you all do? What would you like?'

'To be left alone,' is the unspoken reply in the mind of most of his guests, but of course the ungracious thought is not put into words. The pertinacious pleasure-hunter maps out the day for them. They can only resign themselves to his will, hoping that some happy coincidence, such as morning visitors, or a fall of snow, may give them a pretext for remaining comfortably by the fireside.

There are always some people who are more restless or less self-sufficing than others, who really prefer anything to their own society or remaining quiet; but these are exceptions, and to those who are victims to this kind of energetic ruling it is poor comfort to know that the same wearisome repetition awaits them on the morrow.

Kind-hearted people often unintentionally inflict considerable annoyance on their friends by inquiring anxiously every morning after their health. One comfort is that the inquirer often forgets to wait for a reply; for as sleepless nights and aching heads are in themselves sufficiently miserable, few are desirous of going through a cross-examination upon them.

There has been a considerable

change of late years in the fashion of breakfast. It is a good deal more *à la française* as to time, ranging from half-past nine to twelve. Tea and coffee are seldom now put upon the table, but are made out of the room, or by servants, on the side-table, who hand the cups as they are wanted. In some large houses several small tables are set for breakfast, so that, as there are only three, or at most four places, people may be said in some sense to breakfast alone, or at least with whom they please. This is, upon the whole, a good arrangement, but we doubt if it would not be still more desirable for people to breakfast alone in their rooms. The objection to this would probably be, that to carry up breakfast to eighteen or twenty people as varied and *recherché* as it is made now, consisting of fish, hot and cold meat, and fruit, as well as tea, coffee, bread, butter, and eggs—to send up, in fact, to each person a miniature dinner, would exhaust the resources of the largest establishment. One way, and perhaps the best way of meeting this difficulty would be to imitate the example of most foreigners, who have a cup of coffee or chocolate when they first rise, and only come down at eleven or twelve o'clock for the *déjeuner*, which with them corresponds to our luncheon; for no more eating is considered necessary till dinner-time, which is generally not later than seven o'clock. They have meat and wine as well as tea and coffee, and their *déjeuner*, in fact, combines breakfast and luncheon in one. This is in many respects a much wiser division of the day, as it leaves the whole afternoon free for exercise or amusement, either at home or abroad. But the amount of food that is put before us at breakfast is totally unnecessary, and if the meal were changed to a more simple one there would be no longer any difficulty about having it alone.

Though we have been discussing our breakfast, nothing has been said of the food of which it should consist. People's tastes are so different that it is quite impossible to lay down any gastronomic law upon a

meal the constituents of which vary from bread and water, to salmon and grouse, and *pâté de foie gras*. We have seen unhappy wretches deliberately pour out a tumbler of cold water as their only breakfast beverage. Others, who make equal sacrifices at the shrine of health, are content to abjure even bread and butter, and breakfast entirely on some unpalatable mess, which, by dint of advertisements, has worked its way into fashion. Gentlemen who are addicted to field sports, and who for the most part despise luncheon, make breakfast a most substantial meal. Indeed, modern breakfasts seem drifting back to the beef and ale and goodly capons that young ladies found necessary to support nature in Queen Elizabeth's time. Ladies, and idle men of a more sedentary turn, are contented to depend mainly upon luncheon.

There are other kinds of breakfasts, besides the early morning meal of which we have been speaking. It is a constant habit with the literary world in London to have *réunions* of scientific and agreeable people early in the day, and what in the evening would be a *conversazione*, in the morning is simply called a breakfast. But the greatest misnomer of all is the habit, in London, of calling a dinner, and a ball and a supper, if given *al fresco*, a 'breakfast.' No one dreams of going to these parties till five o'clock, and they last frequently till the small hours of the morning. As the meeting usually takes place in the garden or grounds of some villa near London, the guests appear in morning dresses, which we suppose is the reason of this strangely misapplied term.

There is another annoyance to which those who never breakfast alone are exposed. Letters in the country always arrive in the morning, and we are tolerably sure when we go down stairs to find a packet of letters on the table awaiting us. It is amusing to watch the different manner in which people behave about their letters. Some dart eagerly upon them, are instantly absorbed in their contents, from time to time doling out small pieces

of intelligence from them; others examine them carefully, and then lay them aside, deferring the pleasure or the pain of their perusal to a 'more convenient season;' others, and these for the most part young men, take them up with real or affected indifference, and transfer them at once to their pockets. The chances are that these consist principally of reminders, more or less pressing, from the neighbourhood of Bond Street, Regent Street, and Piccadilly. Their contents may possibly be paraphrased in the parody of a well-known ballad:—

- 'You remember, you remember,
The little bill you owe;
'Tis but two pound ten and four, 'sir,
And I've waited long, you know.
- 'On my word, sir, on my word, sir,
I wouldn't trouble now,
But I've got a long account, sir,
To make up, and don't know how.
- 'You do take, sir, you do give, sir,
Three letters every day;
O D V is what you take, sir,
I O U is what you pay.'

It is to be feared that these 'rejected addresses' form a large portion of many people's correspondence! There is one very odd peculiarity that many people have about their letters, and one for which it is difficult to account. If a letter or note is brought, and the receiver is somewhat puzzled to know from whence it comes, the seal is closely investigated, the direction pondered over, the postmark held up to the light; every possible trouble is taken to examine the outside of a letter, when, by simply opening it, the desired knowledge would be attained. Does this show that human nature delights in a mystery?

In some houses it is the custom for the children to be brought down to be admired at breakfast. This habit, unless the children are quiet to stupidity, cannot fail to be a nuisance. The only time that we can gladly hail the appearance of children out of their own legitimate sphere, is in the formidable half-hour before dinner is announced. Then they create a diversion, and possibly suggest topics of conversation.

Breakfast is generally, more or less, a solemn process. The only aim at sprightliness it was ever our fate to witness was so disastrous in its results that we could only hope the attempt would never be repeated. It was at a large party in a country-house, and the conversation had accidentally turned upon eggs. The young lady of the house, who was seated by a *ci-devant jeune homme*, an exquisite of the last generation, who had been evidently taken with her beauty and gay spirits, declared that it was impossible to break an egg by pressing it ever so tightly, provided you held it in such a manner that the two ends, and no other part, touch the palms of the hands. Her neighbour heard her with a supercilious smile, and recommended her to try. She repeated that she had seen it done constantly, and would convince him there and then of the truth of her assertion. So saying, she took up an egg, and turning towards him, said, 'Now, see if I am not right!' When, to her dismay, the egg smashed at once, and its contents spurted over the very particular gentleman by her side, soiling his faultless shirt and waistcoat, and clinging pertinaciously to his whiskers and stubbly beard. Utterly dismayed at such a very unexpected disaster, partly from amusement, and partly from nervousness, Miss

— burst into a violent fit of laughing. Her example was followed by several others, for in truth nothing could present a more ludicrous and unhappy appearance than the poor man. Besides which, he was furiously angry, believing the whole thing to have been a previously arranged practical joke, and to see that he was the laughing-stock of the company, of course enraged him still more. In vain the poor girl tried to explain that the accident was quite unintentional, and, indeed, that her theory still held good, as the egg was broken not by the pressure but by her ring, which she had forgotten to remove. He would hear nothing, hurried out of the room to repair the mischief done to his dress, and would not return to the breakfast-table; in fact, we did not see him again, for he left the house the same day.

We have not spoken of the arrangement of a breakfast-table, or the pretty decorations of which it is capable. Flowers seem more in keeping with breakfast than with dinner, for if the china is ever so beautiful, or the damask ever so fine, a breakfast-table is dull and colourless without them. But however inviting it may be made, we still hold to our theory that for the most part it is better to breakfast alone.

H. T.



ANECDOTE AND GOSSIP ABOUT CLUBS.

PART I.

THE word *Club* has puzzled the brain of many an acute etymologist, and of many a lazy speculator who is content to wonder on for ever as to what in the world so odd, and abrupt, and compact a monosyllable might originally mean, and where in the world it dropped from, to become a euphonious part of English, and latterly of almost universal speech.

Bailey, one of our veteran lexicographers, defines a club—which he identifies with the Saxon *clubbe*, and associates with the Latin *clava*—as (1) a great thick stick; and (2) an assembly of good fellows. The verb *to club* comes, according to the same authority, from the Saxon *cleovan*, to cleave, and refers to the division of expenses amongst the members, where it was expected of 'every man to pay an equal share.' Skinner is of the same opinion; deriving the verb *to club* from the Anglo-Saxon *cleofan*, *findere*, to cleave, divide, because the expenses are divided into shares or portions. *To club* is thus, with him, to contribute a share or portion; and a club is an assembly of persons, contributing each his share or portion. Noah Webster, as becomes his diluvian Christian name, is more recondite, and quotes the Welsh *clopa* as a probable derivation. On the whole, we are rather inclined to favour the theory of Webster; for if it be allowed, it will help us somewhat to get out of another difficulty which it requires a dashing decision to solve. We refer to the question of the antiquity of clubs. For if the modern word be a direct descendant of one similar in sound in the language of the Cymry—a language which has been proved, to the perfect and unanimous satisfaction of the demonstrator himself, to have been the language of our first parents—it would not be too much to assume, even for so unassuming a person as the present writer, that Adam had invented the word to describe the important little commu-

nity of which he was the President, and of which Eve, according to Euripides and Milton, was the *Vice*.

But he is a poor thing in comparative philology who cannot make one word do double duty—who cannot engraft a slip from one language into the stock of another. The notion, which belongs to the Anglo-Saxon derivation, of an equal or equitable division of expenses, is no embarrassment to us. If money had not yet been coined or dug from the tortured bowels of the deep, expenses could still be jointly borne by a system of equivalents. Labour is the basis of capital. We know that—

'Adam delved and Eve span,'

though what she span for is not so easy to decipher in the præ-figleaf epoch of her existence—and that he was a 'grand old gardener,' and she a setter-out of simple and elegant repasts. The manly, invigorating toil of the one was fairly compensated by the gentle activity of the other; and if Eve had earned, by previous exertion, the right to crack her filbert, Adam no less, by grateful and unswearing labour, had made good his privilege, like a very ancient Pistol, to enjoy his leek.

We are aware that there are many painful contrasts between the club-life of Eden and that of Pall Mall. Cookery was nowhere in those primeval days; and the illustrious Soyer would no doubt have inferred, from the fact that, even when preparing to entertain company, there was 'no fear lest dinner cool,' that soup—in which temperature is, if a small, yet an emphatic consideration—did not initiate the banquet. However, all things must have a beginning, just as imperatively as, philosophers tell us, all things must have an end. Housekeeping is not learned perfectly in a prolonged picnic; and it would not have surprised us if Milton, who has dogmatized as much about Paradise as most people, had stated that the first *déjeuner* therein was not, strictly

speaking, *à la fourchette*. Club-life, again, is not a gourd, a mushroom, or even a Minerva. It is not the growth of a day, just as Rome was not the growth of a day. It does not leap forth fully equipped and perfect in all points, like an unmothered goddess. But what we have chiefly to complain of—it is, by the way, a nice question whether, if perfect rules had been in vogue in the Adam-and-Eve club, we should ever have had the opportunity either to complain or to approve of its rules, or of anything else connected with it—is that no code of exclusion had been drawn up, or, if it had, that it was administered with a too great laxity. The black ball had either not been introduced for the keeping out of ineligible candidates, or the mother of mankind forgot, on at least one memorable and disastrous occasion, to exercise her privilege; and this, too, in the absence of her husband, who, by as disastrous an oversight, had omitted to leave his *veto* proxy. The Club of Paradise was essentially a club for two; the introduction of a third member, it may be said with reverence, played the serpent with it. So much for the antiquity of clubs. It is enough to have fixed the first; and we shall not again intrude on the other side of the Flood, except barely to mention that memorable little association which floated over its dangers secure within the wooden walls of the Ark. That also was a temporary association, which carried within itself the seeds of dissolution. With the subsidence of the waters it was dissolved accordingly.

Man, it has been profoundly observed, is a social animal. He likes to link his life to that of another man; sometimes in desperation, of love or of some other pleasant affection, to that of a woman. But in addition to his fondness for society—a disposition which presupposes a tendency to interchange views on things in general in random and miscellaneous gatherings—he is also an associative animal. That is, he is social and exclusive at once. He will be on intimate terms with some one, not with every one. He will have his choice, more or less, in his

convives or companions. He is not a straw or a feather, to be drifted anywhere or blown upon by every wind of heaven; not a pipe, to be played upon by every passing bungler of a musician. This tendency to correct sociability by exclusiveness, is one which manifests itself in different degrees in different countries, and in different stages of taste or phases of civilization. The higher his amount of culture, the more dainty and *exigeant* will a man be in the demands he makes for a like amount in his fellows; and if the training of the intellect has not worn away and erased the heart, the greater will be the fastidiousness with which he selects the few whom he will venture to make the depositaries of his profounder sentiments. Education multiplies indefinitely the possibility of differences of opinion, although it abridges the likelihood of their external manifestation. Two New Zealanders may only be distinguished by the preference of the one for an Englishman, of the other for a Frenchman—we mean when viewed as *matériel* for their simple cuisine. But national enlightenment and individual cultivation will introduce questions of even greater delicacy and importance than the relative succulence of a Jesuit and a Protestant missionary. And there is scarcely a point of difference in matters political, ecclesiastical, social, scientific, literary, or artistic, which has not been the basis on which a club—an association which recognizes the identity, on some important question, of its members, and the diversity of opinions entertained by the persons without their rules—has not been founded.

England has been reckoned the native land of clubs, and the Englishman the most clubbable of animals. The reason for this has been found in his disposition to unbend and to reflect himself within a limited circle. He likes to take down the windows of his heart; but it shall not be on the highway. He likes to converse about the secrets of his party; but he will not betray its watchwords to any but ascertained sympathizers. The fal-

lacy has before now been pointed out which made Archbishop Trench, in his unmitred, decanal days, infer that because the *club* is, in its modern sense, a peculiarly English idea and entity, therefore the English are peculiarly sociable above all the other nations of the earth. 'The contrary is true,' as Grace and Philip Wharton, in their 'Wits and Beaux of Society,' jointly affirm; 'nay, *was* true, even in the days of Addison, Swift, Steele—even in the days of Johnson, Walpole, Selwyn; ay, and at all time since we have been a nation. The fact is, we are not the most sociable, but the most associative race; and the establishment of clubs is a proof of it. We cannot, and never could, talk freely, comfortably, and generally, without a company for talking. Conversation has always been with us as much a business as railroad-making, or what not. It has always demanded certain accessories, certain condiments, certain stimulants to work it up to the proper pitch. "We all know" wears the cleverest and wittiest people under the sun; but then our wit has been stereotyped. France has no "Joe Miller;" for a *bon-mot* there, however good, is only appreciated historically. Our wit is printed, not spoken; our best wits behind an inkhorn have sometimes been the veriest logs in society. On the Continent clubs were not called for, because society itself was the arena of conversation. In this country, on the other hand, a man could only chat when at his ease; could only be at his ease among those who agreed with him on the main points of religion and politics, and even then wanted the aid of a bottle to make him comfortable. Our want of sociability was the cause of our clubbing, and therefore the word "club" is purely English.'

In any case, the English are not to have it all their own way in the matter of clubs, as if other nations, whether of antiquity or of modern times, knew nothing about them. The tendency to association rests, as we have already had occasion to recognise, upon the fact of identity or of likeness of taste or opinion on the part of the persons associated,

with a synchronous idea of unlikeness or unsympathy in regard to their binding principles on the part of the persons without their pale. Wherever there has been community subsisting side by side with indifference or antagonism, there has always been a tendency to incorporation. And corporations, whether ancient or modern, are in their essence clubs, whether they do or do not justify their claim to the title by the equal distribution of expenses, or whether, in fact, they have or have not expenses at all to incur or to defray. Club, indeed, in this sense, is not a name derived from a necessity, but from an accident of organization. The esoterics of Pythagoras, the mystics of Eleusis, were virtually clubbists, as being differentiated from the exoterics or from the uninitiated. Such as these, and as the Essenes amongst the Jews, were in fact the philosophical or religious club-men of antiquity. Other associations for the prosecution of morals, or of immorals, as the case might be, were well enough known to Greece; and, when introduced furtively into Rome, alarmed the virtue of the senate.

Clubbism has resulted from expatriated nationality. The old colonial Greek would cleave to his fellow-Greek as against the barbarian whom he superciliously excluded from the amenities of his society. The Roman pro-consul or centurion would unbend with his fellow-Roman when he would not suffer the intimate or equal advances of the chain-mailed Dacian or the Briton of the meteoric hair.

Politics have been a club-bond; and associations, ages before our own Carlton or the French Jacobins, had been formed for the conservation or for the overthrow of existing governments.

Science had its clubs dotted here and there throughout a scattered Hellas, ages before our own Royal Society sought to explain the reason why a living fish introduced into a vessel brimful of water would not cause the water to overflow.

Art was a mystery, and a basis of association. Caste and hereditary handicrafts were the insignia of the

clubbist spirit, as nowadays are the trades' unions, the strikes, and the lockouts of labour and the employers of labour. There is, indeed, scarcely any end which two men may have in common which may not give rise to an association for the purpose of accomplishing that end, whether it be for good or for evil; for revolution or for consolidation; for science or for amusement; for gambling or for plunder; or even, *testibus* the Thugs *cum* De Quincey, for the fine art of murder.

But chiefly we look upon the club as a social gathering of convives; of men who, whatever be the profounder purpose for which they assemble together, agree in this, that they shall be comforted with apples and stayed with flagons in congenial society. Eating and drinking are, if not the life of clubs, a very visible sign of their existence. The spirit of adhesion is in the bowl or the loving-cup; the soul of co-partnery is in the cookery; the sentiment of confraternity is warmly cherished at the extremity of an Havana; and the clouds of external difference are dissipated along with the narcotic incense to such gentle winds as an enlightened theory of ventilation permits to play around the smoking-room.

A churchwarden, whether done in flesh and blood or, less fearfully and wonderfully, in pipe-clay, was, we have reason to believe, beyond the most gorgeous dreams or the most magnificent ideals of Plato. Yet the philosopher enjoyed his Symposium, as did many of the cultivated and curious Athenians of his own and of after times. We have a taste of the quality of some of these meetings in the 'Symposium Questions' which the piety of Plutarch has preserved and discussed. The idea of gathering for the joint refection of mind and body has given us the 'Deipnosophists' of Athenæus, and the 'Saturnalia' of Macrobius. Athens had its clubs proper, where each man sent his proportion of the feast, and brought his proportion of the intellectual entertainment. Of these, the club named after Hercules is the one which, perhaps, at the present day

is the best remembered. Sparta was clubbish to the backbone in the idea of its common repasts, where the public tables were spread for messes of fifteen each, the members of which were elected by ballot. We leave these, however, to their black broth and their laconisms, that we may come to the foaming tankard and the wit-combat, to the sparkle of champagne and the effervescence of repartee.

Perhaps the earliest club in England of which we have any traces was one of which Occleve, and probably Chaucer, were members. It was flourishing in the reign of Henry IV., and was called 'La Court de bone Compagnie.' It was a society governed by its duly appointed officers, and amenable to a certain code of regulations. 'This society of four centuries and a half since was evidently a jovial company,' says Mr. Timbs; to us its members are simply empty bottles, marines, and dead men.

Ben Jonson, whose social and affectionate affinities were, to do him justice, as remarkable as his convivial proclivities, was the founder of a club that met at the Devil tavern near Temple Bar. The rare old Ben would doubtless be magnificent in the midst of his literary 'sons,' whose privilege it was to wait reverently for his hiccups and his flashes of wit and merriment. For the moment we prefer, however, to think of him as a member of that more historical which met at the Mermaid, in Bread Street, and to which belonged Raleigh, Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Donne, and others of only less celebrity. But it was years after this that we make acquaintance with the word 'club;' for formerly the thing had gone under different names, according to the different objects proposed. The *genus* had to be named after the species had grown and multiplied. 'We now use the word *clubbe*,' says old John Aubrey, F.R.S., and the gossiping recorder of 'Miscellanies,' 'for a sodality in a taverne'—sodality, in this case, being, as we opine, the Latin for a 'free-and-easy.'

So early as 1659, when Aubrey became a member of the Rota, after due balloting and admission, we find that politics had penetrated far into club-life; and it is not wonderful that we should find Dryden thinking it necessary to ask indignantly, during the patriarchal government of Charles II., who was the father of (so many of) his people, by what sanction they became the rallying places of the Opposition. 'What right,' demands glorious John, 'has any man to meet in factious clubs to vilify the government?' What right, indeed!

But we have anticipated. Before the first real club was opened under that name, a society of wits who met at the Mermaid, and whom we have just mentioned, had flourished and sparkled under the favour or the presidency of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. Who would not, if he could—conveniently, that is, without sacrificing his privileges as a contemporary of telegraphs, express trains, and limited liability hotel and finance companies—have given a pretty premium to have been stowed away in a corner of the room, or to have served for 'one night only' as a drawer of their strong waters, if he might but have listened to such 'wit-combats' as Beaumont celebrates in an epistle to the 'rare Ben' of our literature, and as Fuller alludes to in his 'Worthies'? 'Many were the wit-combats,' says the latter, 'betwixt Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, which two I behold (in my mind's eye, Horatio!) like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war: Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention.' Beaumont is more rapturous a describer, as becomes one who had personally assisted at the intellectual revels to which he refers. One or two lines of the following quotation from him are known to nearly everybody; the whole of it may be rather more unfamiliar.

'Methinks the little wit I had is lost
Since I saw you; for wit is like a rest
Held up at tennis, which men do the best
With the best gamesters: what things have we
seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have
been
So nimble and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life; then when there hath been thrown
Wit able enough to justify the town
For three days past, wit that might warrant be
For the whole city to talk foolishly
Till that were cancelled: and when that was gone
We left an air behind us, which alone
Was able to make the two next companies
Right witty; though but downright fools, more
wise.'

Modern scepticism has thrown much doubt on the long current tradition that it was Sir Walter Raleigh who founded the Mermaid Club. It was very pleasant to receive this account of its institution, by faith; it can for the future be received, alas! by nothing short of credulity. Gifford, however, who is not generally omnivorous in his beliefs, speaks of the Mermaid as though he saw no reason to challenge the popular sentiment as to Sir Walter being its father. In addition to this, he endorses the commonly received notion of the Mermaid having stood in Friday Street, Cheapside; whilst it is said by Ben Jonson himself, who must have been well informed on the subject, at least when he entered the tavern, to have been in Bread Street. But the difference is reconciled when we have an opportune explanation that the Mermaid in Bread Street, the Mermaid in Friday Street, and the Mermaid in Cheapside, were all one and the same Mermaid with different outlets and approaches. The house was consumed in the great fire of 1666.

Now for Gifford. 'About this time (1603),' he says, 'Jonson probably began to acquire that turn for conviviality for which he was afterwards noted. Sir Walter Raleigh, previous to his unfortunate engagement with the wretched Cobham and others, had instituted a meeting of *beaux esprits* at the Mermaid, a celebrated tavern in Friday Street. Of this club, which combined more talent and genius than ever met

together before or since, our author was a member; and here for many years he regularly repaired, with Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Selden, Cotton, Carew, Martin, Donne, and many others, whose names, even at this distant period, call up a mingled feeling of reverence and respect.'

Simon Wadloe, the host of the Devil Tavern, which stood near Temple Bar, and had for a sign St. Dunstan pulling the devil by the nose, seems to have been a magnate of good fellows, if, that is, the complimentary rank of Duke Wadloe, and Simon the King, conferred upon him by Ben Jonson, ought to be taken as the tribute due to honest worth. His liquor, we fear, was not so princely as his character; for Ben declares that he wrote his comedy 'The Devil is an Ass,' when he and his sons 'drank bad wine at the Devil.' Was there a punning charge in the title of this play against the commercial imprudence of acquiring a reputation for the sale of undrinkable fluids? For the Apollo Club, which met here, Ben Jonson drew up his celebrated 'Leges Convivales,' in which he was disinterested enough to recommend temperance and to eschew the utterance of 'insipida poemata.' Above the door of the club-room was placed a bust of Apollo, and underneath the bust were inscribed the following lines of 'Welcome,' which were after his death authenticated by the inscription, borrowed from his tomb in Westminster Abbey, 'O Rare Ben Jonson.'

'Welcome all, who lead or follow,
To the Oracle of Apollo.—
Here he speaks out of his bottle,
Or the tripod, his tower bottle;
All his answers are divine,
Truth itself doth flow in wine.
Hang up all the poor hop-drunkers,
Cries old Sim, the king of skinkers;
He that half of life abuses,
That sits watering with the Musca,
Those dull girls no good can mean us;
Wine it is the milk of Venus,
And the poet's horse accounted:
Ply it, and you all are mounted.
'Tis true, the Phœbeian liquor
Cheers the brain, makes wit the quicker,
Pays all debts, cures all diseases,
And at once three senses pleases.
Welcome all, who lead or follow,
To the Oracle of Apollo.'

Rare Ben was king here, and patriarch; looked up to by his surrounding 'sons' now as 'the boon Delphic god' himself, now as a *deamon* to that deity. Ladies were allowed to attend the meetings of the club; but whether they exercised any suffrage there in the shape of open vote or ballot, we know not. We would respectfully relegate the task of discovery to Mr. J. S. Mill, whom we fancy we have probably helped to a new and valuable argument for his next advocacy of female enfranchisement. If a woman could vote at the Devil, why not at the less important and less brilliant club of St. Stephen, with whom she would naturally have a more familiar spirit.

Poor Ben, canonized at the Devil, was sadly shorn of his splendour at Hawthornden, whither he had gone on foot, and where he spent three weeks with Drummond, to whom he detailed those maudlin exaggerations of the miserable circumstances of Spenser's death, which every person of sensibility tries hard not to believe. Drummond has recorded his impressions of the character of Ben Jonson; in which it will be seen that he darkly alludes to the latter's change of religion. Whilst under a cloud—in prison, in fact, for the murder of an actor, of which he was acquitted—Ben had been converted to the Roman Catholic faith by a priest of that persuasion who visited him. With his enlargement came his recantation; and it is certified, as an evidence of his sincerity, that upon his reconciliation with the Church of England, he drained the sacramental cup in his satisfaction at finding himself again a member of a religious community that had the good taste to celebrate the communion in both kinds. His spiritual life was too robust to be supported on a wafer. 'He is a great lover and praiser of himself,' says Drummond; 'a contemner and scorner of others; given rather to lose a friend than a jest; jealous of every word and action of those about him, especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he liveth; a dissembler of ill parts which reign in him; a bragger of some good thing that he

wanteth; thinking nothing well but what either he himself or some of his friends and countrymen hath said or done; he is passionately kind and angry; careless either to gain or keep; vindictive, but, if well answered, at himself; for any religion, as being versed in both; interpreteth best sayings and deeds often to the worst; oppressed with fantasy, which hath ever mastered his reason, a general disease in many poets.'

Thomas Randolph was one of the adopted sons of Ben Jonson. He was born at Nuneham, near Daven-try, in Northamptonshire, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was the author of 'The Muse's Looking Glass,' 'The Jealous Lovers,' of a 'Divine Pastorall Eglogue,' which is extant in a MS. of the Harleian collection, where it forms one of a 'Handful of Celestiall Flowers.' How natural it is may be inferred from the fact that its pastoral *personæ* argue the question of predestination; a mistake into which it was the vice of his age to fall, and into which Spenser had previously fallen, when in his 'Shepherd's Calendar' (1579) he made Colin Clout and his fellows of the crook enter upon questions as abstruse and learned as those which occupied the council of Milton's Pandemonium. Randolph impaired his fine talents by the indulgence of intemperate habits, and precipitated the death which cut short his promise at the age of twenty-nine. The introduction of Randolph to Jonson, and their assumption of a correlative sonship and paternity, is one of the salient traditions of the Apollo Club. Randolph had remained sufficiently long in London without means, to have held really as well as poetically a 'Parley with his Empty Purse.' This was a poem which Jonson had presumably seen and admired. Randolph, indigent yet curious after literary celebrities, determined to feast his eyes with a sight of London. Accordingly, at a fitting moment he repaired to the Devil; but being unknown, and abashed by his own conscious want of money, he ventured no further than to peep into the room where

a small company of choice spirits were assembled, Jonson being one. Ben, catching sight of the 'scholar's threadbare habit,' called out, 'John Bopeep, come in,' which Randolph did without further invitation. Immediately the company began to make rhymes upon the meanness of his clothes, ordering in, at the same time, a modicum of sack to keep their wit from rusting. This was a challenge to Randolph, who returned the compliment in character by thus addressing the company, four in number:—

'I, John Bopeep, to you four sheep,
With each one his good fleece,
If that you are willing, to give me five shilling,
'Tis fifteen pence a-piece.'

'By J—,' and Jonson here swore an oath which is now almost the monopoly of Irishmen—'I believe this is my son Randolph.' The extemporised affiliation was confirmed; and Randolph was ever after one of the adopted 'boys' of father Ben.

The Rota, which we have already named as counting Aubrey on its roll of early members, was instituted in the year 1659. It was a republican debating club, and used for the dissemination of republican principles. It met in New Palace Yard, Westminster; and derived its name from a plan proposed to the House of Commons, by Henry Nevil, one of the members of the Rota, and which it was the design of the club to promote, that a third part of the national representatives should rote out by ballot every year, and be incapable of re-election for three years to come. Round the table 'in a room,' Aubrey tells us, 'filled every evening as full as it could be crammed,' sat Henry Nevil aforesaid, Milton, Marvell, Charles Wolseley, John Wildman, Cyriac Skinner, Dr. (afterwards Sir William) Petty, Harrington, and their friends, discussing ideal constitutions and administrations. The principal spouter or lecturer at this club was Harrington, who gave frequent prelections here on the advantage of a commonwealth and the ballot. This was the James Harrington who wrote an Utopian Aristocratico-Republican work called

'*Oceana*,' published in 1656; and who managed to win Mrs. Claypole's assent to procure the privilege of dedicating the performance to the Protector, her father; whose government, nevertheless, was assailed in it as 'the violent administration of the Protector by his bashaws, intendants, or majors-general.' Harrington was a republican, but no leveller, and held firmly by the inherent and exclusive abilities of gentle blood to lead and to command successfully. Hume, who pronounced the '*Oceana*,' although it be the model of a perfect republic, the most rational of all similar productions, further observes that 'it was well adapted to that age, when the plans of imaginary republics were the daily subjects of debate and conversation; and even in our time it is justly admired as a work of genius and invention.' It was, we may remark in passing, against this 'Heathenish Commonwealth' of Harrington, that Richard Baxter published his '*Holy Commonwealth*,' intended to assert the superiority of a monarchy over either an aristocracy or a democracy. The Rota, of which we have said that Harrington was the Mercurius, or chief speaker, was broken up after the Restoration. A reference to its members and their pursuits survives in the third Canto of the Second Part of Butler's '*Hudibras*,' the argument of which sets forth that

'The Knight, with various doubts possess'd,
To win the lady goes in quest
Of Sidrophel the Rosy-crucian,
To know the destinies' resolution.'

Sidrophel is described by Butler as being—

'as full of tricks
As Rota-men of politics.'

It has been pleasantly but rather illiberally remarked that the second Charles was said to have died a papist because he had no religion at all during his life. When such a king had been brought back to take the place of a 'puritanical protectorate,' and especially when he had placed the country at the feet of France and invited insult and injury from Holland, it was not wonderful that loyalty and independence of

personal and national feeling should be at war. Nor was it wonderful that men of opposite parties, when they met together to discuss their bottle and their pipe, should fall out with rather uncivil dudgeon, and make themselves mutually disagreeable and mutually uncomfortable. Society, therefore, if it would have any unanimity or peace in its meetings, must have, amongst other conditions, and beyond other conditions, a like political shibboleth. The vehemence of religious and political partisanship combined with the introduction of coffee-houses to originate and to multiply the formation of clubs whose members might with security discuss opinions about which they were in the main unanimous, or about which, being unanimous, they could afford to be silent at the same time that they had no trepidation at the thought of their accidental introduction.

It was during the reign of Charles II. that men left such open gatherings as were afforded at the '*Grecian*,' a coffee-house which, in 1665, was kept in Devereux Court, Strand, by a Hellenic gentleman, named Constantine; '*Will's*,' which Dryden a few years later made illustrious by his wit and critical acumen; '*Garraway's*,' of Exchange Alley. It was, we say, during the reign of Charles II. that men began to find it convenient to forsake the open gatherings of such establishments as the above, and to betake themselves with birds of their own feather to separate houses. Political opinions dictated the several places to which gentlemen resorted for their refreshments; so that presently there came to be recognised and regular Whig and Tory coffee-houses. In the time of Queen Anne, the '*Cocoa-Tree*' in St. James's Street was reserved for the Jacobites; while Whigs alone frequented the '*St. James's*' in the same street. The club politician of the reign of Queen Anne had, however, learned to concern himself with smaller matters than his predecessor of the Commonwealth, the Protectorate, or the Restoration. Whilst the latter had been plotting to compass a revolution, the subversion of a dy-

nasty, or the overthrow of an existing government, the former was content to intrigue for the downfall of a ministry or for the disgrace of a favourite.

The 'October Club,' named from the peculiar tippie—October ale—which its patrons most affected, was one of the most uncompromising of Tory associations. It numbered about a hundred and fifty members, country gentlemen and county representatives, who drank their enthusiastic toasts, sometimes to the king over the water, and at others to Dr. Sacheverell and the Church of England. The meetings of the October Club took place at the Bell, in King Street, Westminster, where the fiercest Jacobite of them all tolerated a portrait of Queen Anne, by Dahl, which hung in the club-room. They did not understand temporising, and could not brook any processes of political expediency. They found fault with the Harleian administration, which took office in 1710, because its members treated with some moderation their rivals, the Whigs, whom the Octobers would have impeached without reserve or exception. 'We are plagued here,' says Swift, in a letter to Stella, February 10, 1710-11, 'with an October Club; that is, a set of above a hundred parliament men of the country, who drink October beer at home, and meet every evening at a tavern near the Parliament, to consult about affairs, and to drive things on to extremes against the Whigs, to call the old ministry to account, and get off five or six heads.' It was to cool the noble rage of these rustic legislators that Swift wrote his skilful, judicious, and successful 'Advice humbly offered to the Members of the October Club.'

Even at its fiercest, the October had been too slow for some of its choicer spirits, who, seceding from the original society, formed the March Club, which kept the vestal fires of its altar in an intenser and more constant flame.

Other clubs with which Swift was closely identified were the Saturday, the Brothers, and the Scriblerus. 'I dined,' he says, writing to Stella

in the year 1713, 'with Lord Treasurer, and shall again to-morrow, which is his day, when all the ministers dine with him. He calls it whipping day. It is always on Saturday; and we do, indeed, rally him about his faults on that day. I was of the original club, when only poor Lord Rivers, Lord Keeper, and Lord Bolingbroke came; but now Ormond, Anglesey, Lord Stewart, Dartmouth, and other rabble intrude, and I scold at it: but now they pretend as good a title as I; and, indeed, many Saturdays I am not there. The company being too many, I don't love it.' It is not every Irish dean who could afford or assume to be so exclusive.

Swift was in his time a very important and influential political character. He knew much of the club-life of England of his day, and had studied it with minute attention. A few years before the time at which he wrote the letter to Stella from which we last quoted, he had made a singular *début* at Button's coffee-house, whilst yet his literary reputation was restricted, and his intimacy with the wits of the metropolis was limited to Congreve and a few others with whom he had contracted an acquaintance at Sir William Temple's. Button's was at this time a noted rendezvous of the wits, who for several successive days observed a strange clergyman come into the coffee-house, who seemed utterly unacquainted with any of those by whom it was frequented. It was his practice to lay his hat down on a table, and walk to and fro at a good pace for half an hour or an hour, without speaking to any mortal, or seeming to attend in the least to anything that was going forward. He would then take up his hat, pay his money at the bar, and walk away without opening his lips. After having observed his singular behaviour for some time, they concluded him to be out of his senses, and accordingly distinguished him by the appellation of the 'mad person.' They now became more attentive than ever to his motions; and one evening, while they were observing him,

they saw him cast his eyes several times on a gentleman in boots, who seemed to be just come from the country, and at last advance towards him, as if to address him. All were eager to hear what the dumb mad divine had to say, and immediately quitted their seats to get near him. Going up to the country gentleman, Swift, in a very abrupt manner, and without any previous salute, asked him: 'Pray, sir, do you remember any good weather in the world?' The country gentleman, after staring a little at the singularity of his manners and the oddity of the question, replied: 'Yes, sir, I thank God, I remember a great deal of good weather in my time.' 'That is more,' returned Swift, 'than I can say; I never remember any weather that was not too cold or too hot, too wet or too dry; but however God Almighty contrives it, at the end of the year, 'tis all very well.' Thus having said, the mad divine resumed his hat, and speaking no further word and taking no further notice of any one, quitted the coffee-house, leaving the staring spectators more confirmed than ever in their opinion of his insanity. On their part, it was unhappily an error only of time. Towards the close of his life, Swift was subject to fits of giddiness, which finally developed into a chronic state of fitfully illumed lunacy. It was in 1736, whilst occupied with a poem entitled 'A Character, Panegyric, and Description of the Legion Club,' a bitter vituperative satire, of which the vigour and the indelicacy are both up to the standard of Rabelais, that he was seized with an attack so severe as to incapacitate him ever after from any work that demanded continuous thought or labour.

But we return to the year 1713, when Swift drew up the rules of the Brothers' Club, which met every Thursday, and which had for its object 'to advance conversation and friendship, and to reward learning without interest or recommendation. We take in,' he says, 'none but men of wit, or men of interest; and if we go on as we began, no other club in that town will be worth talking of.' Originally the Brothers

met at the Thatched House Tavern, in St. James's Street; from which, for purposes of economy, they migrated to the Star and Garter, in Pall Mall. It was one of the Brothers, 'Duke' Disney—'a fellow of abundance of humour, an old battered rake, but very honest; not an old man, but an old rake'—who 'said of Jenny Kingdown, the maid of honour, who is a little old, that since she could not get a husband, the queen should give her a brevet to act as a married woman.'

The Brothers had a political purpose, which having served, it was broken up; its dissolution having been precipitated through the animosity of Oxford and Bolingbroke. In 1714, Swift was busy in organizing the Scriblerus Club, which was rather literary than political. Of this society, Oxford and Bolingbroke, Arbuthnot, Pope, and Gay, were members. The name of Martin Scriblerus owed itself to a pun of Lord Oxford's upon the patronymic of Swift, the common or generic term for both these birds being swallow. The transactions of this society have been partly preserved in 'P. P., Clerk of the Parish,' a satire upon Burnet's 'History of his own Time,' and partly in the 'Travels of Lemuel Gulliver.'

Mr. Timbs, in his recent work on the 'Club Life of London,' has so conveniently epitomized a certain tract, reprinted in the Harleian Miscellany, which was the first to introduce a general knowledge, true or false, of the Calves' Head Club, 'in ridicule of the memory of Charles I.,' that we are inclined to transcribe his account of it. The tract alluded to is entitled 'The Secret History of the Calves' Head Club; or the Republican unmasked. Wherein is fully shown the Religion of the Calves' Head Heroes in their Anniversary Thanksgiving Songs on the 30th of January, by them called Anthems, for the years 1693, 1694, 1695, 1696, 1697, now published to demonstrate the restless, implacable spirit of a certain party amongst us (1703), who are never to be satisfied until the present Establishment in Church and State is subverted.'

'The author of this "Secret History," supposed to be Ned Ward, attributed the origin of the Club to Milton, and some other friends of the Commonwealth, in opposition to Bishop Nixon, Dr. Sanderson, and others, who met privately every 30th of January, and compiled a private form of service for the day, not very different from that long used. "After the Restoration," says the writer, "the eyes of the government being upon the whole party, they were obliged to meet with a great deal of precaution; but in the reign of King William, they met almost in a public manner apprehending no danger." The writer further tells us, he was informed that it was kept in no fixed house, but that they moved as they thought convenient. The place where they met when his informant was with them was in a blind alley near Moorfields, where an axe hung up in the club-room, and was revered as a principal symbol in this diabolical sacrament. Their bill of fare was a large dish of calves' heads, dressed several ways, by which they represented the king and his friends who had suffered in his cause; a large pike, with a small one in his mouth, as an emblem of tyranny; a large cod's head, by which they intended to represent the person of the king singly; a boar's head with an apple in its mouth, to represent the king by this as bestial, as by their other hieroglyphics they had done foolish and tyrannical. After the repast was over one of their elders presented an "Icon Basilike," which was with great solemnity burnt upon the table, whilst the other anthems were singing. After this, another produced Milton's "*Defensio Populi Anglicani*," upon which all laid their hands, and made a protestation in form of an oath for ever to stand by and maintain the same. The company only consisted of Independents and Anabaptists; and the famous Jeremy White, formerly chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, who no doubt came to sanctify with his pious exhortations the ribaldry of the day, said grace. After the table-cloth was removed, the anni-

versary anthem, as they impiously called it, was sung, and a calf's skull filled with wine, or other liquor; and then a brimmer went about to the pious memory of those worthy patriots who had killed the tyrant and relieved their country from his arbitrary sway; and lastly, a collection was made for the mercenary scribbler, to which every man contributed according to his zeal for the cause and ability of his purse.

'The tract passed, with many augmentations as valueless as the original trash, through no less than nine editions, the last dated 1716. Indeed, it would appear to be a literary fraud, to keep alive the calumny. All the evidence produced concerning the meetings is from hearsay; the writer of the "*Secret History*," had never himself been present at the Club; and his friend from whom he professes to have received his information, though a Whig, had no personal knowledge of the Club. The slanderous rumour about Milton having to do with the institution of the Club may be passed over as unworthy of notice, this untrustworthy tract being the only authority for it. Lowndes says, "This miserable tract had been attributed to the author of '*Hudibras*;' but it is altogether unworthy of him."

The same writer proceeds: 'Observances, insulting to the memory of Charles I., were not altogether unknown. Hearne tells us that on the 30th of January, 1706-7, some young men in All Souls' College, Oxford, dined together at twelve o'clock, and amused themselves with cutting off the heads of a number of woodcocks, "in contempt of the memory of the blessed martyr." They tried to get calves' heads, but the cook refused to dress them.

'Some thirty years after, there occurred a scene which seems to give colour to the truth of the "*Secret History*." On January 30th, 1735, "Some young noblemen and gentlemen met at a tavern in Suffolk Street, called themselves the Calves' Head Club, dressed up a calf's head in a napkin, and after some hurras, threw it into a bonfire, and dipped

napkins in their red wine and waved them out of the window. The mob had strong beer given them, and for a time halloed as well as the best, but taking disgust at some healths proposed, grew so outrageous that they broke all the windows, and forced themselves into the house; but the Guards being sent for, prevented further mischief." The "Weekly Chronicle" of February 1, 1735, stated that the damage was estimated at "some hundred pounds," and that the Guards were posted all night in the street, for the security of the neighbourhood.'

Many of the anthems said to have been sung at the meetings of the Club are preserved. A certain Benjamin Bridgewater was the most distinguished laureate of this heartless and disgusting society. But considerable doubt has of late been thrown upon the validity of the testimony which imputes to Englishmen so coarse and brutal a celebration of an unhappy anniversary. Mr. Timbs sums up a rather long but interesting account of this Club, by stating his conclusion that the whole affair of the celebration of 1735 was a hoax, kept alive by the pretended 'Secret History:' and sensibly confesses

that 'there is no more reason for believing in the existence of a Calves' Head Club in 1734-5 than there is for believing it exists at present.'

The King's Head Club was a society instituted 'for affording to court and government support, and to influence Protestant zeal: it was designed by the unscrupulous Shaftesbury: the members were a sort of Decembrists of their day; but they failed in their aim, and ultimately expired under the ridicule of being called "Hogs in Armour."'

The members met at the King's Head Tavern, near Temple Bar. They acquired also the name of the Green Ribbon Club, from the favour by which they were to be recognised upon their days of 'street engagements.' They were provided with silk armour for defence; and for offence they carried a certain pocket weapon called the Protestant flail, made of *lignum vitæ*, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, on account of its death-dealing potency. This implement is known in modern times as a life-preserver. The King's Head Club is illustrious, amongst its lesser glories, for having given the word *mob*, contracted from *mobile vulgus*, to the English language.



ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

I HAVE long devoted myself to that kind of observation which

'with extensive view,
Survey's mankind from China to Peru.'

Of course it has fallen to me, in the operation, to remark many an anxious toil and eager strife, as Dr. Johnson has done before me—many a passion of hope and fear, of desire and hate, of ambition and of love. The conclusion of the whole matter—so far, that is, as I am concerned, for I do not wish to commit the old bear to any proposition half so amiable—has been that love is, after all, the master passion, vanquishing honour, laughing at death, and, about this time of year especially, writing innumerable letters. The catholicity of love and of love-making is the only absolute one; and I back it for the only true and genuine eirenicon. The memory of St. Valentine is touchingly and appropriately honoured even by those who have no idea of the red-letter days of a Christian calendar. Fluttering Cupids daintily hold in their softest fetters the gallant mandarin who sees the gentle Venus, *hominum Divumque voluptas*, reflected in the adorable and elliptical eyes of his celestial charmer. Dragged along by the silken cords, we behold in our mind's eye the representatives of all populations, from the Patagonian to the Esquimaux, from the Maori to the Fox Islander, from the Hottentot to the extra-civilized races of Europe.

How the impish progeny of the Queen of Love ring out their joyous glee and let fall their tinkling laughter at the heterogeneous but unanimous procession which marshals itself on the artist's brain and peoples his quaint and fertile invention! First with a becoming and national, but only outward, *insouciance*, marches Young England, male and female; after whom, separated only by the elegant natives of the Flowery Land, who have been introduced already, proceed, with more outward demonstrations of affection, the representatives of a rather more elderly

England. The drill-sergeant has fallen back upon the once despised glories of the goose-step, and seems to rejoice in parading the affection of his well-preserved elect. Follows an Arcadian, sentimentally haranguing his lady-love in the chastely-ornamental style of Claude Melnotte, and eloquently descanting about that chateau of his that, on the shore of some lake in lovely Spain, towers up into the eternal summer. Merrily, and taking pleasure pleasantly, trips to dance-music the gay army subaltern of *la grande nation*. Then a nondescript pair, whose passion is that of romance and disguise, who exchange the ever-fresh and kindling vow in the worn-out language of the formal past, and tread meanwhile a stately measure. Follow a crest-fallen couple who have dared the impious experiment of electing friendship to the place of love, one of whom, the spectator rejoices to observe, is justly being tweaked as to the nose for his audacity. The pet god is not more amiable when indulged than vengeful when his patience has been too much or too impudently tried. Next after these rebuked and punished wretches, a lady of Elizabethan time and dignity receives with a gratified hauteur and with a guarded mouth the addresses of the gallant who pays a half-Mephistophelean homage in the shape of a kiss on the coyly-surrendered hand; whilst the knight, whose motto is 'God and the Ladies,' sighs to think of the vows that come between himself and a more particular selection. The squire is happier with his pillioned demoiselle; and Hodge and the grenadier perform to the best of their willing ability the almost double duty which three capricious and capering beauties demand at their hands and hearts. The Elizabethan gentleman in the wake of these is about, we fancy, to contract a *mésalliance*; and the tar walks stoutly off with a lady who must have furtively wandered from the neighbourhood of a court, and who doubtless enjoys the despair of the barrister

who in pleading his own cause has become the most unhappy and hopeless of suitors.

All these, however, are the mere phantoms of the artist's brain; but what shall we say of the fortunate pair whose forms in all but flesh and blood occupy the centre of his ornamental lozenge? What shall we say? It is a difficult question for any writer or reader to answer who is conscious of the necessity of remaining true to an allegiance that has been pledged elsewhere. Turn over the page quickly, fair lady or gallant gentleman, unless, indeed, you have the good fortune to be the identical ones represented in all the intensity of pictorial bliss; in which case, as nobly and ungrudgingly as we may, we will wish each of you joy, and pray that every succeeding day may be a renewal of love and a commemoration of this day of St. Valentine.

What memories does not the name of the dear old saint call up—what memories, not all undashed with regret! For, alas! it is so very easy for the best things to degenerate into the worst! As I walk through the streets in these latter days of January I see in the windows of every print-shop flaring and absurd parodies of the tenderest of passions, monstrosities of inhumanity intended to burlesque the most sacred and the most universal of mortal or immortal affections—coarse and flaunting vulgarities of form and colour, matched by doggerel verses offensive and ribald beyond the furthest stretch of license. Only here and there amongst the hideous caricatures there is erected some chaste, retiring, and half-exposed altar of Hymen, from which the fumes of incense are with difficulty seen to ascend to the delight of a group of fluttering Cupids, and to the edification of a pair of lovers in the act of blessing each other by the interchange of mutual vows of eternal union and constancy.

My earlier memories of the feast of St. Valentine are of a different order. In a primitive and secluded district, where life seemed to win a solemnity even from its monotony, the claims of the most popular of

the saints were not so set at naught. The stately drama was the business of the celebration; the farce, if there was one, was an afterpiece which followed, as the Christmas hilarity followed the morning sermon. I fish up from the imperishable stores of memory the recollection of the mystery that hovered over the actions, the sayings, the innuendoes of my compeers for many days before St. Valentine gave his sanction to those hearty declarations which it were a forlorn hope to suppose could be quite anonymous. The kind of valentine I best remember in those days was one cut out of paper into many curious patterns, and folded afterwards into as many shapes as the ingenuity of waiters has since devised for metropolitan dinner-napkins. Triangular, oblong, square, diamond, circular, polygonal, worked out by the cunning shears to the similitude of most elaborate lace-work, and made vocal by some quaint and ardent rhyme—such were the bait with which we angled for the favour of our chosen fair, and with which, O rapture! we occasionally succeeded in captivating them for a couple of days. The *arbiter elegantiarum* in these matters, without whom nothing could be done, or at least done well, was a cheerful lady who, having alighted the opportunity of taking that ebb in her affairs which led on to matrimony, devoted much of her genial old maidenhood to the delectation of the youth of both sexes. Her services, her taste, her nimble wit and pliant shears, were called into requisition whenever an assault more determined than usual was to be made on some too-obdurate charmer's heart. I know not where now abides the spirit of that vestal priestess of Venus; whether it haply floats about me as I write these lines, or whether, still incarnate, it initiates the youth of the antipodes—whither, obedient to some noble impulse, she went to end her days—into the same mysteries that, twenty years ago, were so piquant and engaging to the youngsters of my native village. Peace be to her, wherever she may be; yea, peace *must* be with her as a condition of



[Drawn by Florence and Adelaide Claxton.]

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

[See the Sketch.]



her benevolent and placid existence.

When the valentine was finished came the task of selecting a 'posie,' a legend, a rhyme of true love, which had to be written round and round inwards until it centred finally in a bleeding heart transfixed by the dart of Love. Let the *blasé* reader try to imagine the ineffable tenderness that welled out in such pathetic words as

'The rose is red, the violet blue,
Carnations sweet, and so are you;
And so are they that sent you this;
And when we meet we'll have a kiss—
A kiss on the cheek and a kiss on the chin,
And when we meet we'll kiss again.'

To this astounding length did our proposals go. Whether they were ever carried out, the present deponent is in no position to say. Another of these poems began with the lines

'As I lay sleeping on my bed,
I saw a rose and it was red;'

the first of which the philosophical inquirer into valentine literature will be interested in comparing with the

'Quant je suy couché en mon lit.'

which commences one of the numerous valentines of Charles Duke of Orleans, a personage with whom we are inclined to wish our space enabled us to make the reader a trifle better acquainted.

In those days, and in that locality, —which, we may inform the reader, in confidence, was in the neighbourhood of the thriving emporium and fashionable watering-place of Dawmere — we urchins, wise in our generation according to our lights, passed by the temptations of the penny-post and delivered our love-missives in person. After this manner. When the shades of evening had fully closed in upon the face of nature, and a row of blinded and curtained lights streamed out fitfully upon the straggling street, the adventurous youth arose and sallied forth. His elegant declaration—possibly he would be Don Juan enough to fortify himself with more than one—being duly directed in the best disguise his hand-

writing could assume, was laid tenderly, silently, and with trepidation of heart against some door behind which his *inamorata* was very likely lurking expectant. One good heavy knock and a scamper of feet in fearful flight; the opening of the door, sometimes all too prompt; the groping for the valentine on the part of the *louvre* and her jealous sisters—these were the circumstances that made illustrious the delivery of each. So far the youngster had proceeded in good faith; but now, after having cooled a little from the fever of doubt as to whether he had been discovered, and as to how his devotion had been received by the idol of his soul, he was at liberty to make fun of the fair to whose charms he was indifferent. His next exploit would be a practical joke. A piece of paper folded up in some form proper to the occasion, and promising as much as if it were veritably sick of love, would be perforated for a piece of string. The sham valentine is laid, as before, on the doorstep; the knocker is thumped as emphatically as before; the retirement as speedy as before, but not to so remote a distance. The operator has only retreated to the further extremity of the string, of which the other end secures the traitorously-folded sheet, when, as before, the door opens. Anxious fingers grope until, in the semi-darkness, they pounce at length upon—the bare, cold ground or the vacant stone. The valentine itself has moved about six inches. 'Twas but the wind.' The eluded fingers try and try again, whilst again and again the wind delights to frustrate their intention of taking possession. Then comes the climax of the joke. Whenever a *grab* has been made at the valentine lying on the ground, a judicious pull from the observing youth has attracted it in his own direction; until the mortified maiden, either at length fairly baffled or fully enlightened, gives up in despair or bristles up in wrath, and closes the door with a bang to a chorus of unmannerly laughter from the associates of her tormentor. A variety of this joke was to draw the 'counterfeit presentment' of a valentine

in crayon; in other words, to chalk a parallelogram on the ground before the door. But this was a comparatively tame affair, as there could of course be only one disappointment and one triumph before the mean trick was exploded. I think I have heard of pins being introduced into the valentines to which strings were attached; but this was getting far beyond the pale of fun into that of mischief, if not of wantonness and malice. For myself I will not, because I cannot, confess to a malpractice of this kind; but of all the others I thank a certain Venus of eleven years old—at that time, of course; she is now a Juno and a matron—I have had my share. To-day, alas! concerning valentines I must profess *actum est*, so far, that is, as the *sending* of them is concerned. But no man can bar his door against the dulcet appeal of a double knock; and if the valentines I have had the happiness to receive for the last three years from, I believe, the same faithful and devoted angel, were sent by any one who reads this tattle of mine, there is still time for her to know that I am looking forward to my annual compliment, and that I am open to a declaration which shall not be anonymous. After this candid advertisement of the state of my affections I shall know, if the post-office is negligent towards me on the morning of the impending festival, that my fair one is faithless and that I am forlorn. May I be spared the tears and dejection of so chilly a conviction; yet let me rather be neglected than scorned. I would not choose to appear, even to myself, depicted with the ears of Midas, or with the sometime head-dress of 'sweet bully Bottom,' the weaver. So much, kind reader, have I been permitted to say of myself; but I have a few stray jottings to lay before you with reference to our dear old St. Valentine and his world-respected day.

The peripatetic delivery of valentines by the principals, to which I have alluded, presents features analogous to the proceedings which, according to the author of 'Rambles in an Old City,' characterize the eve of St. Valentine at Norwich. 'The

streets,' says Madder, 'swarm with carriers, and baskets laden with treasures; bang, bang, bang go the knockers, and away rushes the banger, depositing first upon the doorstep some packages from the basket of stores; again and again at intervals, at every door to which a missive is addressed, is the same repeated, till the baskets are empty. Anonymously St. Valentine presents his gifts, labelled only "With St. Valentine's love," and "Good-morrow, Valentine." Then within the houses of destination, the screams, the shouts, the rushings to catch the bang-bangs; the flushed faces, sparkling eyes, rushing feet to pick up the fairy gifts; inscriptions to be interpreted, mysteries to be unravelled, hoaxes to be found out; great hampers, heavy, and ticketed "With care, this side upwards," to be unpacked, out of which jump little live boys, with St. Valentine's love to the little ladies fair; the sham bang-bangs, which bring nothing but noise and fun, the mock parcels that vanish from the doorstep by invisible strings when the door opens; monster parcels, that dwindle to thread-papers denuded of their multiplied envelopes, with fitting mottoes, all tending to the final consummation of good counsel, "Happy is he who expects nothing, and he will not be disappointed." It is a glorious night; marvel not that we would perpetuate so joyous a festivity.'

In Devonshire the peasants believe that if they go to the porch of a church, and wait there till half-past twelve o'clock on the eve of St. Valentine's day, with a quantity of hempseed in their hands, and at the time above mentioned, scatter the seed on either side, repeating these lines—

'Hempseed I sow, hempseed I mow,
She (or he) that will my true love be,
Come rake the hempseed after me,'

his or her true love will appear behind, in the act of raking up the seed just sown, in a winding-sheet. In some parts of Norfolk this superstition appears modified in time and purpose. It is there a part of the practices on the eve of St. Mark (April 25) to sow the hempseed in

the expectation that it will be mown by the sheeted ghosts of those who are to die that year, marching in grisly array to the parish church. And the rake of the Devonshire spectre is replaced by the scythe of the ghostly Norfolkman. A more pleasant and a more strictly valentine use is made of a variety of the same ceremonial at Ashborne, in Devonshire. There, if a young woman wishes to divine who her future husband is to be, she enters the church at midnight, and, just as the clock strikes twelve, begins to run round the building, repeating, without break or intermission, the following formula:—

'I sow hempseed, hempseed I sow,
He that loves me best,
Come after me and now.'

And when the young lady has thus performed the circuit of the building a dozen times without stopping, the figure of her lover is supposed to answer to the gentle invocation, and follow her.

These are Old World superstitions, and we are not to look for them in the New. But in America St. Valentine is popular, and would seem to be turned to a direct practical advantage in the way of initiating the process of courtship and of facilitating the process of matrimony. Of course, in a great country that licks creation, and is just now reposing and 'recuperating' after licking itself; where marriages are cooked up in a short railway trip, and performed by some zealous and opportune clergyman *in transitu*; where railway companies attach 'bridal chambers' to excursion trains as a part of their regular furniture; and where enterprising couples plight their troth and endow each other with all their worldly goods in a balloon—in such a country it is no great marvel if there should be some truth in the hymeneal puff of an advertisement like the following, culled from a *Worster Democrat* issued in early February a few years ago:—
The great increase in marriages throughout Wayne Co. during the past year is said to be occasioned by the superior excellence of the

VALENTINES

sold by George Howard. Indeed, so complete was his success in this line, that Cupid has again commissioned him as the "Great High Priest" of Love, Courtship, and Marriage, and has supplied George with the most complete and perfect assortment of "Love's Armor" ever before offered to the citizens of Wayne County. During the past year the "Blind God" has centred his thoughts on producing something in the line far surpassing anything he has heretofore issued. And it is with "feelinks" of the greatest joy that he is able to announce that he has succeeded.

'HOWARD HAS GOT THEM!

To those susceptible persons whose hearts were captured during the past year, George refers, and advises others to call on them, and find them on their way rejoicing, shouting praises to the name of Howard. The "blessings" descend unto even the third and fourth generations, and it is probable that the business will go on increasing year upon year, until Howard's valentines will be a "household word" throughout the land. The children on the house-tops will call to the passers-by, shouting

"HOWARD'S VALENTINES!"

while the cry is echoed from the ground, and swelling over hill and vale, reverberates the country through.

'Remember that the only regularly-authorized dispenser of Cupid's goods is

GEORGE HOWARD,

two doors East of the American House, Worster, O.

'Orders by mail promptly attended to. Prices range from six cents to five dollars.

'VALENTINES!!

'A large and splendid assortment of valentines, together with all the necessary fixings, for sale wholesale and retail, at the New Column Building.

'J. H. BAUMGARTEN & Co.

'Worster, Feb. 3, 1853.

'VALENTINES.—Behold, St. Valentine's Day is coming, and all are seeking for messages to be despatched under cover of this Saint to friend or foe. They are provided of all kinds, styles, and varieties, ready for use. The turtle-dove kind, with its coo! coo! the sensible sentimental, the cutting and severe, and, in short, everything that can be required. Just call on George Howard or J. H. Baumgarten & Co., and you can be suited to a T.'

Does the curious though hazily-informed reader wish at this stage of our progress to suggest a question as to who St. Valentine was? That is a question to which, thanks to the 'Acta Sanctorum' and Alban Butler's 'Lives of the Saints,' an answer is tolerably easy and precise. 'Valentine was a holy priest in Rome, who, with St. Marius and his family, assisted the martyrs in the persecution under Claudius II. He was apprehended, and sent by the Emperor to the Prefect of Rome, who, on finding all his promises to make him renounce his faith ineffectual, commanded him to be beaten with clubs, and afterward to be beheaded, which was executed on the 14th February, about the year 270. Pope Julius I. is said to have built a church near Ponte Mole to his memory, which for a long time gave name to the gate now called Porta del Popolo, formerly Porta Valentini. The greatest part of his relics are now in the church of St. Praxedes. His name is celebrated as that of an illustrious martyr in the Sacramentary of St. Gregory, the Roman Missal of Thomasius, in the Calendar of F. Fronto, and that of Allatius, in Bede, Usuard, Ado, Notker, and all other martyrologies on this day. To abolish the heathen's lewd, superstitious custom of boys drawing the names of girls, in honour of their goddess, Februa Juno, on the 15th of this month, several zealous pastors substituted the names of saints in billets given on this day.' To this we would only enter the single caveat that the *true* relics of St. Valentine are, in a beatified state, at this present moment flaunting in unnumbered stationers' windows,

and waiting to be scattered abroad to the four winds of heaven on the wings of every post. St. Francis de Sales, a bishop and prince of Geneva, who died in 1622, and was canonized in 1665, to whom we are inclined, for the sake of his devout treatise on 'Practical Piety,' to forgive everything but this, was one of the 'zealous pastors' who, to use the words of Alban Butler, 'severely forbade the custom of valentines, or giving boys, in writing, the names of girls to be admired and attended on by them: and, to abolish it, he changed it into giving billets with the names of certain saints to honour and imitate in a particular manner.' It is too heartrending to contemplate the disappointment of the ingenuous youth who, hoping to receive the likeness or the name of the blooming Mariana or the saucy Julietta, received instead the effigies of some musty and dyspeptic ascetic at loggerheads with the devil—some Antony of the Desert, or some Dunstan of the Tongues.

In the early part of last century it was the custom for young folks in England and Scotland to celebrate a little festival on the eve of St. Valentine's Day. 'An equal number of maids and bachelors,' says Misson, a traveller of veracity and discernment, 'get together; each writes their true or some feigned name upon separate billets, which they roll up and draw by way of lots, the maids taking the men's billets, and the men the maids'; so that each of the men lights upon a girl that he calls his *valentine*, and each of the girls upon a young man whom she calls hers. By this means each has two valentines; but the man sticks faster to the valentine that has fallen to him than to the valentine to whom he has fallen. Fortune having thus divided the company into so many couples, the valentines give balls and treats to their mistresses, wear their billets several days upon their bosoms or sleeves; and this little sport often ends in love.'

The great Pepys has some quaint and picturesque particulars of his valentine experience. We copy the following entries from his 'Diary':

'Valentine's Day, 1667. This morning came up to my wife's bedside (I being up dressing myself) little Will Mercer, to be her valentine, and brought her name written upon blue paper in gold letters, done by himself, very pretty; and we were both well pleased with it. But I am also this year my wife's valentine, and it will cost me 5*l.*; but that I must have laid out if we had not been valentines.

'February 16. I find that Mrs. Pierce's little girl is my valentine, she having drawn me: which I was not sorry for, it easing me of something more that I must have given to others. But here I do first observe the fashion of drawing mottoes as well as names, so that Pierce, who drew my wife, did draw also a motto, and this girl drew another for me. What mine was, I forget; but my wife's was, "Most courteous, and most fair," which, as it might be used, or an anagram upon each name, might be very pretty.' Pepys tells us also that the Duke of York, being on one occasion the valentine of the celebrated Miss Stuart, afterwards Duchess of Richmond, 'did give her a jewel of about 800*l.*; and my Lord Mandeville, her valentine this year, a ring of about 300*l.*'

But we meant to have anticipated another question on the part of the benevolent reader. St. Valentine being such as he was, and not a bishop who immortalized the day by writing a love-letter upon it—as we were in very early youth given mistakenly to understand by a heresiarch of a nursemaid—how comes his name to be used as a cover for all the love-doings that take place under the quoted sanction of his name and authority? This has already been vaguely explained in the quotation from Alban Butler. But we may say ten more words about it; and these words we choose to say by deputy of the author of a small paper entitled 'The true story of St. Valentine,' which appeared in the 'Churchman's Family Magazine' for February of last year. 'In ancient Rome there was, about the

middle of February in each year, held the public festival called Lupercalia, which was given in honour of the Lycean Pan. One of the numerous ceremonies at this pagan festival was to put the names of young women into a box, from which they were drawn by the young men, as chance directed; and as in those days auguries were thought much of, and exercised great influence over the minds of the superstitious Romans, the girl whose name was thus drawn by lot from the box was considered as a person very likely to become the future wife of the drawer. As a good deal of barbarous and licentious conduct was often the result of this ceremony, the zealous fathers of the early Christian Church used every possible means in their power to eradicate these vestiges of pagan superstitions. The names of saints instead of these girls were placed upon the billets, and that saint which each drew was to be his tutelary guardian during the following year, and as the Lupercalia was, as we have already mentioned, held about the middle of February, they appear to have chosen St. Valentine's Day whereon to celebrate their reformed festival. The exertions of the priests were not altogether barren of good results, for although St. Valentine's Day is a day peculiarly devoted to love affairs, its festivities are no longer associated with the pagan aspect which called forth the righteous ire of the good Fathers of the Church; a result for which we ought to be truly thankful, and one which is a striking example of the good work which Christianity is ever doing. It has not abolished the custom, but purified it. It has taken away the old heathen coarseness and licentiousness, but has left unchanged the play of human feeling and affection; true-hearted lovers, instead of being afraid of their newly-discovered emotions, may have reason to congratulate themselves that they are under the tutelage of so good and noble a saint as Valentine of Rome.'

S. ST. M.

A FORGOTTEN VALENTINE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MESSENGER WHO BORE IT,

AND who never delivered it. Perhaps it would have been too much to expect of him that he should do so; too much to expect that the little packet, carelessly taken and thrust away amongst others, would ever enter his head again. At any rate it did not. He was a young man still, though he had been for some years a widower; and he had fallen in love, and was on the way to learn his fate.

It cannot be flattering to a young lady, if she knows it, that her suitor should be capable of taking thought for any one besides herself; but certainly Sir Hugh Rainham tried to believe that he was not making his own happiness altogether the first consideration. There was the well-being of his little girl to be thought of; and what did he know about bringing up little girls? He had heard sensible people say, and he was ready enough now to accept the dictum, that the wisest thing a man in his position could do would be to marry again; wisest both for his own future and his child's. He said this to himself as he stood in Evelyn Neville's drawing-room, hat in hand, waiting, looking out upon the bare branches which were soon to be green again, and wondering, in a desultory fashion, if this February day would bring him another spring-time, or only the desolate branches, the dead leaves whirling about, and the cold sky beyond. He had not long to wait. When she came into the room, and that thrill went through his heart which the presence of one we love alone can bring, it must have left some mark upon his face; for she knew why he had come, and in a few rapid arguments had decided upon her answer. He was rich; but she did not care so much about that, not knowing what it was to be anything else; he was Sir Hugh Rain-

ham; but she didn't care for that either, her pride being of another sort: he was good, generous, and devoted; these things she did care for. He loved her; and he came on a day when that same pride of hers was smarting under a sense of neglect. In the few seconds allowed her before he spoke, Evelyn Neville made her decision. She had thought that he knew, and was jealous of, her friendship with that cousin Frank, whom she had fancied might one day be nearer than a cousin. But that was over. The cousins had kept up a childish habit of exchanging valentines; and to-day there was nothing from him, while her own had gone as usual. That was the humiliating part of it. If *she* had broken through the custom, it would have been well; but that *he* should be the first! and when, too, he had given her cause to expect that his would be no ordinary valentine! Here, within her reach, was the means of punishing him; at any rate, of letting him know that she did not care.

Evelyn listened to Sir Hugh with a forced attention; but he knew nothing of that. When he spoke of his little girl, falteringly, she roused up and saw the strong earnestness and anxiety in the man's face; and, strange to say, this touched her more just then than any passionate, lover's pleading from his lips would have done. She turned towards him suddenly, and put her hand into his, and said, speaking of the small Cecilia—

'She shall be very dear to me, and precious: I will care for her, as much as you could desire.'

And when Sir Hugh had left her, she did not repent. It is true that there came upon her a certain sense of being bound; of having done what could not be undone; and that half rebellious desire to be free, which is almost always inseparable

from an act that seals one's own fate. And then the drawing-room was rather lonely; the trees outside the window got a ghostly look, and seemed to wrap themselves up tighter as the fog gathered round them; and—altogether, she thought she would just go and tell her brother, by way of convincing herself that the thing was finally settled.

When she told him, he lifted up his eyebrows and stared at her.

'Is it true?—You *look* as if it were. Rather scared, and that sort of thing. Not that there is anything to be scared about; only I suppose it's proper. Hem! I might have thought of Frank Neville; but this is wiser.'

She bit her lip, but never answered him. She wished he had not said that about Frank, and she didn't like the word 'wiser.' What had wisdom to do with it?

She started from her sleep that night, with a mist before her eyes and a great throbbing at her heart, for Frank's voice was in her ears. Would he care?

But what use to ask, now that it was too late? And that it was too late no one knew better than herself; for to her, having once decided publicly as it were, change would have been impossible.

And on her wedding-day she was to Sir Hugh a radiant princess, far away above him, stooping to crown him with the blessing of her love. Anyone who had seen him that day might have doubted about its being altogether, or even very much for his daughter's sake that he took this step.

'I have reason to be grateful,' he said to his new brother-in-law, when the speechifying was over, and the bride was going away to change her dress.

George Neville looked at her and nodded.

'She's a good girl enough: a little self-willed, perhaps; but then she has always had her own way.'

'And will have it still,' I hope,' said Sir Hugh. 'If I don't make her happy, I shall deserve to be a miserable man all my life.'

In years to come he recalled the

speech, and wondered whether some strange misgiving had moved him to utter it.

Just then Frank Neville was saying to Evelyn, 'So you did not think me worth an answer!'

She was passing through the throng towards the door, and she never faltered or raised her head. No one knew that the words fell upon her with a sudden chill, like a cold hand grasping her heart. She had seen her cousin amongst the guests, and knew that he was looking miserably ill, but she had been too much occupied to think about that.

'What do you mean, Frank?'

'Oh; not much. Valentines don't require answers in a general way; but I think you might have given me a few words last February. However, you'll keep my secret. No one knows it but you, unless it is your husband. What's the matter, Evelyn? You look as if you didn't understand.'

'I don't.'

'You must have had it. I missed the post over-night, and gave it to Rainham, there, as I knew he would see you the next day.'

'To—my husband?'

'Yes; I'll ask him—'

'Frank,' she said, with a heavy hand on his arm, 'forget all this. Never speak of it—for my sake.'

He looked at her with a perplexed expression of inquiry, but he saw that she was white and flurried, and gave up the point.

'Well, we have always been friends; have we not? I would ask you yet for your good wishes, as you have mine; but the doctors say there's something amiss here,' touching his chest; 'and I may not live to—never mind! God bless you, Evelyn!'

CHAPTER II.

ITS MARK ON THE YEARS TO COME.

Sir Hugh brought his wife home: and his hair was not grey, neither had any premature wrinkles marked his face. To his servants there appeared no change in him, either for better or for worse.

He was just the same grave, silent, rather deliberate master they remembered. They did think, indeed, that he was dreadfully polite to his lady; but perhaps that was proper—before servants.

Sir Hugh, taking Evelyn to the drawing-rooms, which he had caused to be altered and brightened for her, turned and said to her, 'Welcome home.'

And as he said it, the memory of his own dreams of that home stung him so bitterly that he half put out his arms to take into them the Evelyn he had once known. But she never saw the movement; and would not have heeded it if she had seen. She passed on into the room, the brilliant light of which seemed to hurt Sir Hugh's eyes, for he put his hand over them suddenly; and for a moment he stood at the door, irresolute; then closed it gently, and went to see after his little girl.

That was natural enough, they said—those gossips down stairs who were always on the watch. But why didn't he take his new wife with him? And why did he stay with the child, hour after hour, till none of the evening remained? The first evening, too! Above all, why, when the household had retired, and all was quiet, did a tall, slight figure, which rustled a little as it passed, go into the nursery and kneel down beside the sleeping child and sob?

The nurse saw, for she was not asleep, as my lady fancied; and she was not likely to keep it to herself, either. These and such things were puzzling. At first they formed a constant source of whisperings and shakings of wise heads; but gradually the gloss of newness wore away from them; the dull days swept on, and something of the grimness of the stone heads that guarded the sweep of steps at the hall-door seemed to have crept into the house. It was so still and silent; so monotonous. But for the small Cecilia, it would have been unutterably dismal. But she was a child, and had childish ways, which remained unchecked. She was quite young enough to take very kindly to the

new mamma, who was so beautiful and so good to her.

'Not like nurse said she would be—ugly and cross,' she said to her favourite playfellow—'but good. I think she could have brought the little princess to life again, as well as the fairy did. You never saw such eyes in your life as she has got; just like the pool under the willows, where we are *not* to go, Charlie, you know; down, as if you couldn't ever see the bottom; ever so deep. And she kisses me, too.'

To which the boy replied, with decision, that she couldn't be a fairy in that case, for fairies never kissed anybody; it wasn't lucky, that was unless they were wicked fairies. And it was all very well now, but when Cecil married him, he shouldn't allow her to kiss anybody.

By-and-by, however, as Cecil grew older, she used to wonder in her wise little head what made her father and mother, when they were alone, talk to each other, if they did talk, so like 'company.' That was her idea of it. She jumped up from the piano one day, and waltzed round to the footstool at Lady Rainham's feet, with a sudden thought that she would find out.

'Well,' said Evelyn, looking at the pursed-up lips, which evidently had a question upon them, 'what's the matter? Is your new music-lesson too hard?'

'My new music-lesson is—is a fidgetty crank,' said Cecil, hesitating for an expression strong enough; 'but it's not that. I was just wondering why you and papa—'

Sir Hugh let his book fall with a sudden noise, and went out of the room, passing the child, but taking no notice of her.

'Why you and papa,' went on Cecil, reflectively, 'are so odd, like grand visitors. When there's any one here I know I have to sit still, and not tumble my frock, nor cross my feet; but when there's no one, it's different.'

'Your papa and I are not children,' said Lady Rainham. 'Grown-up people must be steady, Cia.'

'Then I don't want to be grown up. And I'm sure, quite sure, that I'll never be married, if one is to do

nothing but sit—sit all day long, and have no fun.’

Lady Rainham bent down to kiss the resolute lips that uttered this bold decision, and then her face grew sad. There were times when even to her pride the life she led seemed almost too hard to bear—times when she was mad enough to think she would tell Sir Hugh that the act which stamped him in her eyes as base and dishonoured was no secret from her, as he doubtless believed it to be. But she could not do it. It seemed to her as if the consciousness that she knew would only make him more contemptible in his own eyes as well as in hers. It would but widen the gulf, and make what she was able to bear now utterly intolerable. For she never doubted that the purport of the letter was known to him, and he had suppressed it for his own ends. And the poor boy who wrote it was dead. There was the great mischief of it all. If he had been living and well, so tender a halo might not have rested over the past, and all in the past connected with him; so bitter a resentment might not have been nursed in silence against the wrong which her husband had done them both. But Frank had lived but a few months after her wedding, and she never saw him again. He was dead, and she had killed him—no, not she, but Sir Hugh.

She was thinking such thoughts one day when something made her look up, and she met Sir Hugh’s eyes fixed upon her. There was so peculiar an expression in them that she could not prevent a certain proud, antagonistic inquiry coming into her own. He went towards her with his book open in his hand. He bent down and put his finger on a line in the page, drawing her attention to it.

“How much the wife is dearer than the bride.” This struck me rather, that’s all,” he said, and went away.

Evelyn sat on by the window, but the book dropped from her fingers, and she covered her face. What did he mean? If he had only not gone away then!

‘How could he do that one thing?’ she said to herself. ‘He meant the line as a reproach to me. And I would have loved him—is it possible that I do love him, in spite of it? Am I so weak and false? I want so much to comfort him sometimes that I half forget, and am tempted. But I never will—I never must. I used to be strong, I shall be strong still.’

And so the same front of icy indifference met Sir Hugh day by day and year by year, and he knew none of her struggles. But he wrapped himself up more and more in his books and his problems and writings. New MSS. began to grow out of old ones, for he had always been given to authorship, and the accumulation of papers on various subjects. In these days a little fairy used to come in from time to time with a pretence of arranging them for him. She would open and shut the study door with a great show of quietness, seat herself on a big chest which was full of old papers, and in which she meant to have a glorious rummage some day; and begin folding up neat little packages; stitching loose sheets together; reading a bit here and there, and looking up now and then with a suggestive sigh till he would lay aside his work, and declare that she was the plague of his life. This was the signal always for the forced gravity to disappear from Cecil’s face; for her to jump up, radiant and gleeful, and just have one turn round the room—to shake off the cobwebs, as she said.

‘But you know you couldn’t do without me, and I do help very much. What do you know about stitching papers together? And you are a most ungrateful man to say I am a plague, only you don’t mean it. I wonder what you’ll do when I am married.’

‘Married!’ echoed Sir Hugh. ‘Go and play with your last new toys, and don’t talk nonsense.’

But the word worried him, and made him thoughtful. When he came to consider it, the fairy was no longer exactly a child, though she was as merry as a young kitten. He did a little sum on his fingers in sheer absence of mind, and found

out that in a few weeks she would be eighteen. It was twelve years since he went, that February day, to plead her cause and his own with Evelyn Neville. He used to go now sometimes to the window and look out, and remember the day when he had stood at that other window watching bare branches and wondering about his future. He knew it now. If only he could find out *why* it was thus. What had changed her all at once, on her wedding-day, from the very moment, as it seemed to him, that she became his wife?

Sir Hugh pushed his hair away from his forehead and sighed. He was getting grey by this time, but then he was past forty, and Evelyn, his wife, must be two-and-thirty at least. It occurred to him that he had noticed no alteration in her. She was as beautiful as ever, with the beauty of a statue that chills you when you touch it. He thought he would look at her that evening and see if he could trace no change, such as there was in himself. He did look, when the room was brilliant with soft light, and she sat languidly turning over a book of engravings with Cecil. They formed a strange contrast; the cold, proud, indifferent beauty of the one face and the eager animation of the other. The girl's one hand rested on Lady Rainham's shoulder, caressingly, for the tie between these two was more like the passion of a first friendship than the affection of mother and daughter. Suddenly Cecil pointed down the page and said something in a whisper, and Lady Rainham turned and looked at her with a smile.

As he saw the look, just such a thrill went through Sir Hugh's heart as he had felt when she came to him twelve years ago to give him his answer. No, time had not done her so much wrong as it had to himself, and there was one hope in which she had never disappointed him—her care for his daughter.

'For her sake,' he said that night when Cecilia was gone, 'I am always grateful to you.'

But he did not wait for any reply. He never did. Perhaps he might

not have got one if he had; or perhaps he thought the time had gone by for any change to be possible.

Lady Rainham looked from the window the next morning and saw Cecil under a tall laurel, reading something. And the sun had come out; there was a twittering of birds in the shrubbery, and the sky was all flecked with tiny white clouds. It was Valentine's Day, and Lady Rainham knew that the girl was reading over again the one which Sir Hugh had handed her with such a troubled face at the breakfast table. What did that unquiet expression mean; and why did Cecil, when she saw it, look from him to herself, Lady Rainham, fold up her packet hurriedly and put it away?

It meant, on Sir Hugh's part, that he knew what it was and didn't like it; that he could not help thinking of his life, doubly lonely, without the child. But this never occurred to his wife. Presently some one joined Cecil in the laurel walk, and though of course Lady Rainham could not hear their words, she turned instinctively away from the window.

Cecil was saying just then, 'No, it isn't likely. Who should send me valentines? They're old-fashioned, vulgar, out of date. Charlie, mind I won't have any more.'

'Why not?'

'Because—I'm serious now—for some reason or other they don't like my having them,' said Cecil, motioning towards the house. 'And it's a shocking thing to say, but I'm sure there's something not straight between papa and Lady Rainham, some misunderstanding, you know. I'm sure that they are dreadfully fond of each other, really; but it's all so strange; I do so want to do something that would bring it right, and — I shall have nothing to say to you till it is right.'

'Cecil!'

'I mean it. I am a sort of go-between; no, not that exactly; but they both care for me so much. They don't freeze up when I'm there. I can't fancy them without me; it would be terrible.'

'But Cecil, you promised——'

'No, I didn't. And if I had, I

shouldn't keep it, of course; that is, you wouldn't want me to. It would kill papa to lose me, and as to Lady Rainham, why I never cared for any one so much in all my life. I didn't know it was in me till she woke it up. You remember what I used to say about her eyes. They are just like that; like a beautiful deep pool; all dark, you know, till it draws you close and makes you want to know so much what is underneath.'

Here Lady Rainham came to the window again, but the two figures had passed out of the laurel walk, and she saw them no more.

In the afternoon Cecil went as usual to her father's study, but he was stooping over a book and did not notice her. He was, in fact, thinking the thought that had troubled him in the morning, but Cecil fancied he was busy, and looked round to see what mischief she could do. It flashed upon her that here was a fine opportunity for the old chest, and so she seated herself on the carpet and began her rummage. Presently Sir Hugh, hearing the rustle of papers, looked round.

'I should like to know who is to be my fairy Order,' he said, 'amongst all that mess.'

'I will, papa. I shall give a tap with my wand, and you will see it all come straight. But look here. Isn't this to mamma? It has never been opened, and it's like—a valentine.'

Sir Hugh looked at the large 'Miss Neville' on the envelope, and knitted his brows in a vain effort to remember anything about it. He couldn't. It was very strange. He fancied he knew the writing, but yet could not tell whose it was—certainly not his own—nor recollect anything about the packet. He considered a little and then said. 'You had better take it to her.'

He took a pen and wrote on the cover 'Cecil has just found this amongst my old papers. I have no idea how or when it came into my possession, neither can I make out the hand, though it doesn't seem altogether strange. Perhaps you can solve the mystery.'

CHAPTER III.

ITS MESSAGE—AFTER MANY DAYS.

It was in verse, as Frank's valentines had always been; halting, and with queer rhymes and changes of measure. It was full of the half humorous tenderness of quiet friendship; and it ended with a hope that she would make 'old Hugh' happier than his first wife did; that was if she accepted him; and with a demand for her congratulations upon his own approaching marriage; since he was 'the happiest fellow alive' and couldn't keep the news from her, though it was a secret from all beside.

And the evening grew old; the white flecked sky turned colder, and the moon came out. But Lady Rainham sat with this voice from the dead in her hand, motionless; full of humiliation and remorse. And she was thinking of many years of bitterness and sorrow and pride; and of a heavy sacrifice to a myth, for she had never loved him. And her husband—whom she did love—whom she had so wronged—how was she to atone to him?

By-and-by the door opened and Cecil stole in. And she saw Lady Rainham's face turned towards the window with the moonbeams lighting it, and thought she had never seen anything so beautiful in her life.

'Mamma,' she said, softly, 'why don't you come down? We are waiting, papa and I; and it's cold up here.'

'I will come,' said Lady Rainham; but her voice was strange. Cecil knelt down beside the chair and drew her mother's arm round her neck.

'How cold you are! Dear mamma, is anything the matter? Cannot I comfort you?'

Lady Rainham bent down and held her in a close embrace.

'My darling, you do always. I cannot tell whether I want comfort now or not. I am going down to your father, and Cecil, I must go alone; I have something to say.'

She went into the drawing-room, straight up to where her husband sat listlessly in his chair at

the window. He started when he saw her, and said something hurriedly about ringing for lights, but she stopped him.

'It will be better thus, for what I have to say. Hugh, I have come to ask your forgiveness.'

Sir Hugh did not answer. The speech took him by surprise, and she had never called him Hugh before, since their marriage. He had time enough to tell himself that it was only another mockery, and would end in the old way.

But standing there, with Frank's letter in her hand, she told him all, not sparing herself, and then asked if he could ever forgive her. She was not prepared for the great love which answered her; which had lived unchanged through all her coldness and repulses; and which drew her

to him closer now perhaps than it might have done if her pride had never suffered under these years of wretchedness.

Cecil never knew exactly what had happened; but when her father put his arm round her and called her his blessing, she looked up at him with an odd sort of consciousness that in some way or other the old valentine found in her rummage amongst his papers had to do with the change she saw. And it was her doing. So she made up her wilful mind straightway to exult and triumph over the fact to poor Charlie; and then, if he wanted to send her another next year—why, after a proper amount of teasing and suspense, which was good for him and kept him in order, she would perhaps say that he might.

VISITS IN COUNTRY HOUSES.

No. II.

WHEN Mrs. D—— and her son separated after the London season, each bent upon as full an enjoyment of country life as could be obtained, they made a compact to acquaint each other with their experiences. Mrs. D—— fulfilled her part of the contract in the letter which she wrote to her son Arthur from the Garringtons, in which she described very vividly one phase of society in country houses. Arthur's first visit was to one of his oldest friends, who was a millionaire and a large landed proprietor in the West of England. Sir Archibald Edmonstone had been Arthur's friend at Eton and at Oxford, and now it rarely happened that either of them went to Richmond, or Ascot, or Epsom, or, in fact, any party of pleasure in which the other was not his companion. Scarcely a day passed without their meeting either at their respective homes, or in Rotten Row, or at their clubs. No brothers were ever more inseparable; and the first move which Arthur made out of London was in the direction of Garzington Hall,

where] he was to pick up Sir Archibald and accompany him to Scotland.

Garzington Hall was a large modern house, situated in the midst of a fine old park which had belonged to the Edmonstones for generations. It was a place to be proud of, for it was very beautiful, surrounded by the most magnificent woods, and, from some points, commanding very fine views of the sea, which was about eight miles off as the crow flies. Sir Archibald was about a year older than his friend. His house was still the home of his brother and sisters, who did all they could to make it pleasant to their brother and his friends. He deserved this of them, for there never was a more dutiful son nor a kinder brother; and his great wish was that when he came of age there should be no change in the old ways. Often had his mother remonstrated, saying it was better for her to get out of the way betimes before his wife came to turn her out; to which remonstrance he invariably replied, 'Time enough, mother, time enough. I love my

liberty too well to part with it just yet.'

The Edmonstone family consisted of three sisters and a younger brother, who was still at Eton. They were a racketing lot. Two of the sisters were 'out,' and the third and youngest on the very verge of that interesting moment in every young lady's life, when she bids adieu for ever to the school-room and mixes in the gay and giddy world. They were rather 'fast,' and rather noisy; greater favourites with the gentlemen than with those of their own sex, who were somewhat afraid of them. They could ride well, and across country, too, sometimes; they could pull an oar across the lake which formed the southern boundary of the garden; they could skate, and had been known to shoot, and were not bad shots either. They were almost invincible at croquet; and the knack with which they sent their adversaries' ball flying across the ground was the envy of many of the gentlemen. They could play at billiards, too; and yet the more feminine accomplishments of singing and drawing had not been by any means neglected. Their mother, Lady Theodosia, was a very clever woman—rather blue, but decidedly clever and original, and with a horror of conventionalisms which prevented her seeing any objection to many of the amusements in which her daughters excelled, but for which many of her friends blamed her and them behind their backs, denouncing them as man-ish, unladylike and noisy girls, and congratulating themselves and thanking Heaven and blessing their stars that *their* daughters had more regard for the *convenances* of society and for what they called 'decorum.' But the Miss Edmonstones were as good, honest, warm-hearted, and generous girls as could be found, singularly free from the petty jealousies which disfigure so many of their own age and sex. Nor were they by any means devoid of talent; they inherited a fair share of their mother's cleverness, and could converse as pleasantly and rationally as most people and much more pleasantly than most girls of their age.

They were free from *mauvaise honte*, and yet by no means free and easy. Devoted to their brother, they were always ready for any fun of his suggesting, confident that he never would mislead them into doing anything that was really unbecoming, or could compromise them in the remotest degree. Such was the family by whom Arthur was always well received as one of their brother's oldest and best friends. At this time there was a large gathering for certain cricket matches which usually came off about this time. To make them a more popular institution in the neighbourhood, Lady Theodosia collected as many young people together as she could, and while the days were devoted to cricket, which was anxiously watched by crowds of neighbours and guests for whose accommodation marquees had been conveniently placed, the evenings were spent in tableaux and dancing, which left little time for repose, and made Garzington Hall the most popular place in the county. All the country belles looked forward to these annual gatherings and festivities as their 'red-letter days;' and as speculations upon them were the general theme of conversation before they took place, so their reminiscences were canvassed over and over again. It was from Garzington that Arthur's first letter was dated.

'MY DEAREST MOTHER,—You are wondering why I don't write, and have been abusing me like a pick-pocket for my silence; but if you only knew what we have been doing day after day your wonder would turn altogether the other way. Even now I am writing at 4 A.M. with only one eye open, the other being fast asleep, for I am dead tired, and if I had any time to think about anything I dare say I should find out that I had every conceivable ache that over-fatigue can produce. But don't let your maternal heart become anxious on my account. I am very well, though nearly worn out with the endless racket of this place. Cricket by day and dancing by night leave one's legs very little time to rest. Luckily, Lady Theo-

dosia is very merciful, and gives us some law at breakfast-time. I am generally the last, and, if I dared, would be later still, for, somehow, I am more tired when I get up than when I go to bed. At about 11.30 the wickets are pitched, and by 12 o'clock we are at work. The weather has been fine, and almost too hot. Unluckily, I have always been on the losing side, but we have had capital matches. You will care more for a description of the folk, their names, weights, and colours, than for any account of the matches, which are the engrossing subject here; and yet I think you will like to know the sort of life it is. There has been a cricket match every day, and as it generally lasts till dressing-time there is really very little time for anything else. Then dinner is succeeded by preparations for "tableaux," which are in their turn followed by dancing. I honestly confess that I think this is too much of a good thing. On one or two occasions, when the cricket was over sooner than usual, we were instantly had in request for croquet matches, in which the ladies certainly excelled. Theo. Edmonstone is the best croquet-player I ever saw. I wish you could have seen how well she put down that conceited young puppy Parker. It was as good as a play. You must know that "Happy Parker," as he is called, considers himself an awful swell. He is rich, rather good-looking, and has been, I am told, the spoilt child of fortune. He is in the Blues, and is made a fuss with because he has lots of money, good horses, good shooting, and a good temper. He thinks the whole world is ready to be his humble servant. He had never been at Garzington before, and scarcely knows Edmonstone, never saw Lady Theodosia, and was once introduced to the second girl, Nina, who holds him in special aversion. I never saw any one so cool, free and easy, and off-hand as he is. He swaggers about as if he was bent on showing off his paces, and behaves as if he was the most intimate friend of the family instead of what he is, almost a stranger. One night, when Theo. Edmonstone had been looking after

some of the guests, and had been getting partners for some of her country neighbours, and was standing alone and apart from the dancers, "Happy Parker" comes up with an air and a grace, and in a cool, off-hand way says to her, "You're doing nothing; would you like to dance with me? Come along." To which she quietly replied, looking him full in the face, "No I thank you; that would indeed be one degree worse than doing nothing." He looked awfully sold; but he had found his match, for she is the last girl to stand any nonsense of that sort, and it is time for him to be brought to his bearings. You talk of not having a moment to yourself. Like Miss Miggs, you consider you are always toiling, molling, never "giving satisfaction, never having time to clean yourself—a potter's vessel;" but what would you think of this life? It would kill the strongest man in no time at all, and would flog Banting out of the field. You are hunted from cricket to croquet, from croquet to tableaux and charades, and then to dancing, and the intervening time is devoted to dressing and dining, and you are lucky if you get to bed by 4 o'clock A.M.; for, after the ball, we men adjourn to the smoking-room, where we wind up the festivities with cigars and cooling beverages, and talk over the events of the day, and criticise some fair *débutante* who has blossomed for the first time at the Garrington Ball. To-night, the last of the series, we wound up with Sir Roger de Coverley, sang God save the Queen and Jolly Dogs all in chorus, and gave sundry cheers for Lady Theodosia and the house of Edmonstone.

'But now about the "other folk." The house has been as full as it can hold, and several men sleep over the stables, your humble servant among the number. Lord and Lady Camelford and their son and daughter, Lady Blanche Ross and her husband, Lady Georgina Roach and her two daughters, besides the Thompsons, those very pretty Miss Nashes, and Lord and Lady Fairlight, and some country neighbours. There are, of course, a lot of men,

"loose men" as Lady — would call them, some of whom are invited because of their skill at cricket. Tom Lee and young Drystix are among the number. As usual, Tom Lee is the autocrat of the cricket-field, the ball-room, and smoking-room. He lays down the law in the most insufferable manner, and considers no one has any right to do anything of any kind without his permission. I cannot imagine why he is asked everywhere, for very few people like him, as his cool indifference with regard to the likes and dislikes of his neighbours almost amounts to impertinence. His success last year when he was on the Northern Circuit has made him more unbearable than ever. But as he is too unpleasant a subject to dwell upon, I will tell you about the tableaux. Lady Fairlight and the youngest of the three Miss Nashes were the belles. You cannot imagine anything more beautiful than Lady Fairlight as Mary Queen of Scots at her execution. Lady Camelford's daughter and the Miss Roaches were her maids of honour, and young Lord Tufton was the executioner. Lady Fairlight was dressed in black velvet. In the first tableau she appeared absorbed in prayer while her maids of honour stood weeping around her; and in the second she was in the act of giving her "beads" to one of her ladies. I never saw anything like her expression in this last scene. It was a combination of resignation at her own sad fate and tender compassion for those she was about to leave for ever. The next tableau was from the "Rape of the Lock," in which the youngest of the Nashes represented Belinda. She was exquisitely dressed, and as her forehead is low the effect of her hair being drawn off away from her face was exceedingly good, especially as she has a good brow. Altogether with powder, and flowers jauntily set on the top and side of the mountain of coiffure which she wore, and with patches, and sac, and short petticoats displaying a small foot and neat ankle, she was as lovely a sight as could be seen. Tom Lee did his part well. His

unwhiskered face came in admirably for such a tableau. He was capitally dressed, and so were Miss Nash's two sisters, who filled up the background. The last tableau was of Elaine as she was borne along in her barge. Ellen Pendarve's fine outline came out beautifully as she lay upon the bier, and Lord Camelford's masculine head and features with the addition of a snowy beard well represented the "dumb old servitor" who steer'd the dead "upward with the flood."

In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter—all her bright hair streaming
down—

And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Down to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead
[But fast asleep, and lay as though she smiled.]

I am not sure it was wise to finish the tableaux with one so sad—for it was not easy to shake off the impression quickly, and it was only by a kind of an effort that we returned to jollity. However, we did manage to recover ourselves, and were as jolly as ever, dancing away merrily to fiddle and fife. Our charades were even better than the tableaux; and some of the acting was admirable. Young Drystix made a first-rate conspirator in "Counterplot," and Lord Tufton a capital man milliner. The passages between him and Theo. Edmonstone were admirable. "The Peer," as Tom Lee, his bear leader, calls him, has a quantity of black, greasy-looking hair, a bright colour, good features, and an incipient moustache, which he is always manipulating tenderly; and altogether he well represented that peculiar class of mankind which is devoted to measuring tapes and laces by the yard and to proffering their goods to the fair sex in the most irresistible manner. It seemed to me quite his *métier* to unfold silks and satins, and assure the purchasers that they were "the newest style," the "most fashionable," "quite distinguished," &c., &c. Theo. Edmonstone's contemptuous banter of him, and reckless inconsiderateness in making him display his goods, without the remotest intention of purchasing any, exhibited

to the life the mode in which some ladies of our acquaintance conduct themselves in certain shops which profess to provide them with all that is requisite to their success and reputation in society. And now, dear mother mine, I must shut up and get to bed, for; Edmonstone and I are off early to-morrow on our way to the North. I will write to you again as soon as I can, but if we are worked as hard at Stapleton's as we have been here, I shall not have much time to write. What a pity and a bore too, it is that some of the kindest-hearted and most good-natured people in the world make life such a toil to themselves and their friends. There are people who are always striving to get fourteen pence out of every shilling, and so there are others whose sole object is to get more hours out of every day than is to be got, and so it is all "hurry scurry" after amusement of some kind.

Arthur and Sir Archibald set off early, and travelled as luxuriously and comfortably together as it is possible in this most luxurious age. By dint of proper precautions, in direct contravention of the orders and regulations issued by the directors, and in contempt of the penalties and anathemas annexed to any infringement of those orders, the two friends were able to propitiate the guards so as to secure for themselves the undisputed and undisturbed possession of one compartment, in which they slept and smoked and talked and read as they felt inclined; and in due course of time they arrived at their destination, where they had been invited for grouse-shooting and deer-stalking. The nickname by which 'the Lodge' was known among a certain set of familiar friends was 'Liberty Hall,' because the owner and master of it piqued himself upon allowing every one to do just what he liked, and neither more nor less than he pleased. The bee might be as busy as he would, and the drone as idle. It was from Liberty Hall that Arthur despatched his second letter to his mother.

'DEAREST MOTHER,—It seems to me the world is always in extremes. At Garzington we were never allowed a moment to ourselves. We were hunted from pillar to post, never might be sulky or indulge any wayward fancy of one's own; and here we are allowed to do what we like, go where we like, and indulge any passing mood. I have been here a week, and have very little to tell you; but you will rail at me, and return to your old charge against all men, and say that they can never be pleased, if I say that I do not think the absence of all rule and law, as it exists at "Liberty Hall," conduces to one's comfort. The fact is, than when the master of the house surrenders his right to plan and devise for the amusement of his guests, every one is at a loss to know what to do, and the practical result is that we either go about amusing ourselves in a "shilly-shally" kind of way, or else submit to the dictation of some ruling but less scrupulous individual who forces his own views upon others as to what is or is not the thing to be done. We have at this moment an instance in point. Hervey Gray, a cousin of our host, presumes upon his relationship, and absorbs all the "gillies," and directs us all with much more imperiousness than his cousin ever would assume. At the beginning of our visit we were left very much to ourselves, and had each of us a gilly of our own, and whatever else we wanted, but there was no plan—no combination,—and it did not answer, especially as the master of "Liberty Hall" is not himself much of a sportsman, and has taken "the Lodge" more for the honour and glory of the thing than for his own special love of sport; but now Hervey Gray rules us with a rod of iron, and, though fond of shooting, but very ignorant of the noble art of deer-stalking, lays down the law for us, for the keepers, for the gillies, for everybody and everything, and his law is not always good or pleasant. In short, I am altogether rather out of humour, and think that it is possible to have too much of one's own way, and that Hervey

Gray is not a good substitute for the laird of "Liberty Hall."

'Arthur D—— was quite right in saying that it does not conduce to comfort when the master is not master. It is like an arch without its keystone; there is no centre, no point of union. The combination of law and liberty is rare, but where it exists, it promotes happiness. It sounds almost absurd to use such grand words and ideas for the expression of a very simple fact—that the pleasantest houses are those in which the owners occupy themselves for the comfort and entertainment of their guests, and arrange for them what shall be done, and at the same time make it quite appreciable by all that each one is at liberty to say "yea" or "nay" according to the bias of

his own mind. It is difficult to steer clear of the two opposite evils of which Garzington Manor and Liberty Hall are the types; but there are houses in which the gifted hosts and hostesses contrive to provide for their guests whatever shall be most conducive to their enjoyment without fussiness or dictation. No one is neglected; all are considered; and life passes so easily and pleasantly, without noise or confusion, that we thinking people are scarcely conscious of the amount of tact, consideration, and forethought which they ought to place to the credit of those who make it a part of the business of their life to contribute, as far as they can, to the social enjoyment of their friends.

'TOM SLENDER.'

BEFORE THE FOOTLIGHTS;

or, Sketches of Playhouse Society.

II.

THE PIT AT THE STRAND.



'ILL you be good enough to step this way?'

Taking our position here, my courteous companion, while the orchestra is playing that wonderful selection of popular street airs which forms the overture to five burlesques out of six, you will possibly object that we can see nothing of the performance; but as when we visited Drury Lane together I requested you to turn your back upon the stage, so here, in the little Strand Theatre, I wish you to be blind to the symmetrical actresses and comic dances, while you direct your attention solely to the

audience. Your eyes, my aristocratic friend, I perceive, are directed at once to the private boxes; but it is not at that portion of the house I wish you to gaze. Sink them, if you please, lower and lower: pass over the gentlemen in evening dress, and the ladies in opera cloaks, sitting languidly in the cushioned stalls, and then with your lorgnette sweep the

front row of those crowded seats behind. There! Now the curtain has risen, and the faces are, with but few exceptions, turned towards the stage. It is a strange motley collection of individuals, from almost every class of society, you see before you. The pit of a theatre is a sort of neutral ground upon which all classes may meet. The semi-gentle go there, because it is more respectable than the gallery; the young theatrical lover, because it is cheap; and the genuine playgoer, because it is the best place for seeing and hearing in the house. Let us criticise some of the characters, and then, I think, you will allow the truth of my assertion.

That elderly man who has attracted your attention is, without doubt, a highly respectable farmer, from the midland counties. His son has told him what 'jolly fun' the Strand burlesques are; and, being in London for the first time these ten years, he has come to see and hear for himself. Twenty minutes before the doors were open he took up his position in Surrey Street. He went in with the rush, and struggled into a front place, and for the half-hour before the curtain drew up, entertained his neighbours by telling them it was nineteen years since he had been inside a theatre, and that plays were plays when he was a boy.

You may have noticed, my dear Lounger, suffer me to remark, by way of parenthesis, that the longer the interval that has elapsed since the speaker has been inside a theatre, the louder he usually is in depreciation of the present style of the drama, and in lamentations at its degeneration; and if you care to carry the notion further, and make a broader application of it, you may safely lay it down as a rule in connection with the British snob that the less he knows about a thing the more noisily and vehemently he depreciates it.

However, to return to our elderly man. Look at the perplexed expression on his face. He can make nothing of the rhymed jokes in the burlesque, and is trying to ferret out their meaning—no easy

matter, my intelligent companion, even for you at times, I imagine—and behind him you will perceive a good-natured looking fellow explaining the jests and repeating the puns until they enter the thick head of the farmer in a confused and mangled way. Listen.

'What's that?' asks the countryman, in a hoarse whisper. 'What did that young woman in boy's clothes say?'

His question is unheard, in a roar of laughter at something on the stage, and he repeats it.

'Said she was meal-an'-coaly—ha, ha, ha!'

'He, he, he! Why?'

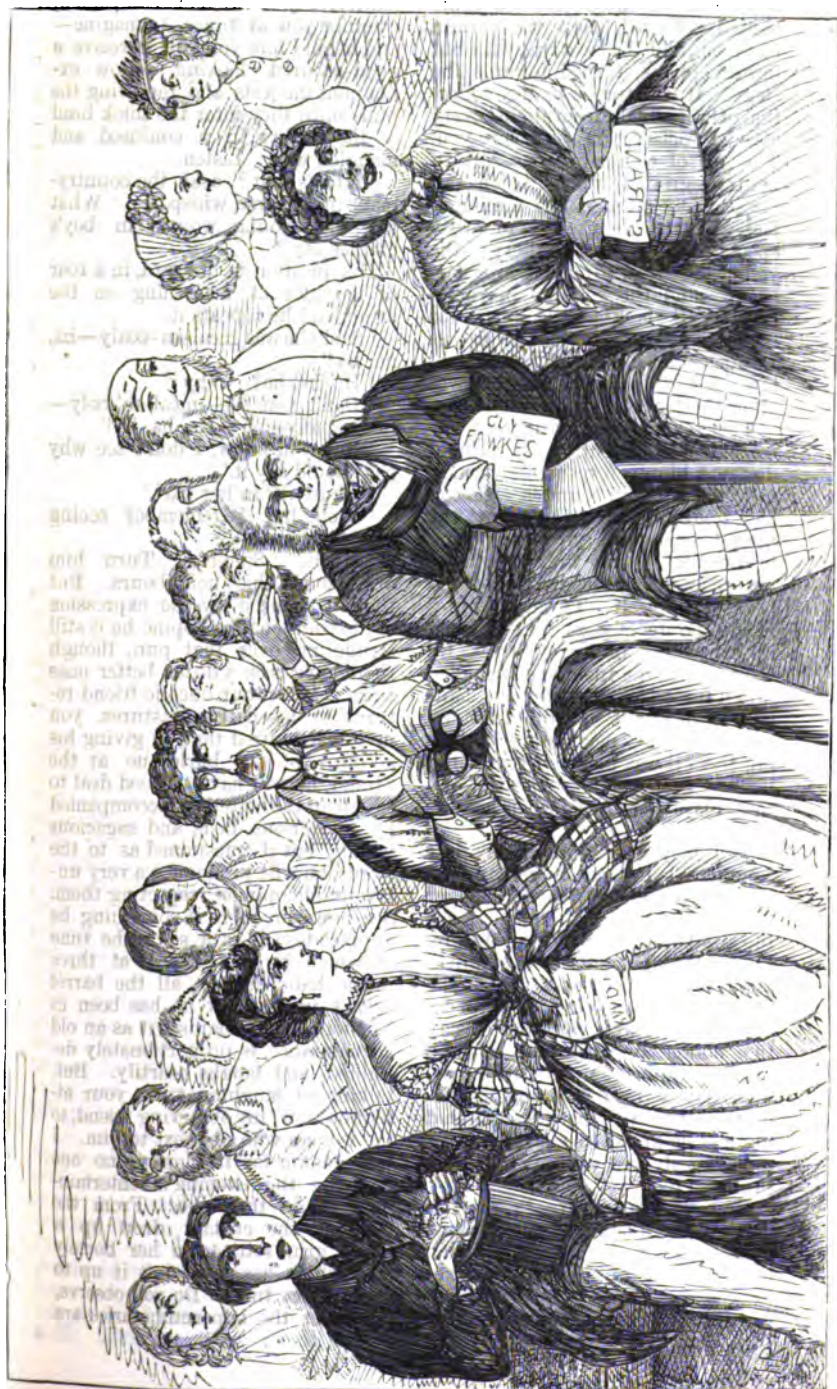
'Don't you see—meal-an'-coaly—melancholy—eh? Ha, ha, ha!'

'But, you know, I don't see why she should say it.'

'Cause it's in her part.'

'Well, but I remember seeing Macready in—'

'Hush,' 'Silence,' 'Turn him out,' shout his neighbours. But though silenced, by the expression of his countenance I opine he is still struggling over that pun, though there have been a dozen better ones since. When our bucolic friend returns to his native pastures, you may rest assured that, in giving his account of the burlesque at the Strand, he will have a good deal to say about the actresses, accompanied by mysterious nods and sagacious winks; but if questioned as to the words, he will pronounce a very unfavourable opinion respecting them. See, however, there is something he appreciates: it is a song, the tune of which he has heard at three music halls, and on all the barrel organs, in the week he has been in London;—he recognises it as an old acquaintance, is proportionately delighted, and laughs heartily. But, talking of laughter, turn your attention now, my observing friend, to the woman who sits next to him. I will answer for it there is no one enjoying the evening's entertainment more than she. From the moment the curtain drew up a broad grin settled on her homely face, which has never left it up to the present time. Do you observe, whenever the supernumeraries are



THE PIT AT THE STRAND.

on, how intently she regards a young pretty-looking girl dressed as a page? That page is her daughter, and she feels a mother's anxiety in her child looking her best, and a mother's pride in her every action. Most probably she herself, in her young days, has trod the boards in sparkling array as a magnificent but silent 'super,' and now is well up in all that pertains to the theatrical world. It is likely enough she keeps a small shop somewhere in the neighbourhood, and exhibits the theatre bills in her window; and I will engage she could tell you the real names of half the Miss Montmorencys and Vavasours in the profession.

At the further extremity of the front row, leaning against the wall, you will recognize a youth we have seen again and again, or, if not that very one, his exact counterpart.

He is one of an unfortunately numerous class—a class generally seen in connection with three-half-penny cigars and short pipes, flashy mock jewelry, and dirty, gloveless hands,—one of a class to be met with at third-rate luncheon bars, at inferior music-halls, and all places of low resort. He has, I may safely assert, a loud voice, a betting-book, and a taste for cheap tobacco; he is fond of coarse personalities, which, with him, are equivalent to wit; he is apt to emphasize every other sentence with wholly unnecessary expletives; he glories in being on sufficiently friendly terms with a prizefighter to shake hands with him on meeting; and he considers the having imbibed more spirituous adulterations than he can walk under a thing to be proud of, and to be told as a wonderfully humorous incident in his life. He came in to the pit late, with a smirk and a swagger; he has stared two respectable girls out of countenance; he has pushed and elbowed an old man from his place, and has sworn at a woman who requested him to allow her to pass before him. Look at him now as he lounges there, his mouth screwed up, whistling, *sotto voce*, an accompaniment to the air being sung on the stage, with his hands in his

pockets and his hat tilted on one side,—look at him, and tell me if you do not see a low vagabond, who, sooner or later, if he meets his deserts, will find his way into one or other of the London police courts. He is, in all probability, a shopboy, or, perhaps, a clerk in a fifth-rate Jew bill-discounter's office; and it will be well for his employer if, one day, the till is not ransacked to pay for those cheap flashy clothes which he delights to wear. He would tell you—supposing he could answer your questions civilly—that he was a 'man of the world,' that he 'knew a thing or two,' and that he was 'up to most dodges.' What do I understand by such phrases? By being a 'man of the world,' I understand that he has succeeded more or less in aping the vices of his betters; by 'knowing a thing or two,' that he could tell you a horse to back for the Derby, and could introduce you to various low scenes of cheap debauchery; and by being 'up' to 'most dodges,' that by association with sharpers he has become rather their accomplice than their dupe. Phew! Let us turn away from him, and forget his miserable existence.

See, there is a nice, pretty, rosy-cheeked girl, a pleasant contrast, in truth. She has been brought here by that very particularly sheepish-looking man, seated behind her, who gazes with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause at the back of her bonnet, and registers solemn but inaudible vows never to take her to the theatre again unless he can sit beside her himself. Hideous pangs of jealousy are preventing him from having the least enjoyment of the burlesque; but yet, I doubt not, she, with a few words, will calm his ruffled temper long before the omnibus has taken them to Camden Town, after the performance has come to an end.

Do you see that gorgeously-attired individual? I should much like, my dear Lounger, here to give you some particulars as to the natural history of the 'swell,' to point out to you the peculiarities of his dress, his manners, and his language, and then from him branch off to the parasite or monkey swell. This

latter is a Brummagem piece of goods, a cheap imitation, a lacquered copy of the genuine article; and, as is the case with all worthless articles, only bearable until the imposture is discovered. The monkey swell has probably a nodding acquaintance with some hanger-on to the aristocracy, and believes in him to a great extent. He dresses after him, speaks like him, walks like him, copies his gestures, and imitates his tastes with enough exaggeration to make himself ludicrous instead of a man of fashion. The monkey swell is a sham and an imposition. On a salary of three hundred a year he endeavours to live in the same style as his acquaintance with three thousand. Shams are the bane of this generation. Laudable ambition is well enough, but why on earth need Tom or Harry buy brass watch-chains of the same pattern as my lord's gold one?

Thank you, my patient friend; that yawn is not thrown away upon me, and I will take the hint. My remarks on the monkey swell were called forth by that highly-objectionable individual with a glass in his eye, who is far from comfortable in the front row, wedged in as he is by the crinoline of a pretty girl on one side, and the portly frame of a middle-aged gentleman on the other. You may see at a glance, for all his pretentious airs, that he is hardly the distinguished individual he would have us believe him to be. I dare say, if he would condescend to wear an apron, he would make a very good shopman, but I am sure no power on earth could make him a gentleman. Do we not know a score like him? Are we not always meeting those sham 'swells,' those unmitigated snobs, who never lose an opportunity of trying to impress upon us what wonderfully fine fellows they are?

But enough of him: let me direct your attention now most particularly to that young gentleman whom 'melancholy appears to have marked for her own.' Observe him narrowly, and I will tell you his history. His manners are mild, his speech is nervous, his heart is susceptible, and his purse is light. It is not

more than six months since that he was the pride of his native village. Then he was a mere lad, who had never been away from home for more than twenty-four hours by himself, and whose greatest dissipation had been a tea-gathering in the village schoolroom, where he had greatly distinguished himself by his ability in handing dishes and cups. This was his first great success in life. But time rolled on (as the novelists say) and it became necessary for him to worship the world and Mammon, or, in other words, to earn his living by becoming a clerk in a merchant's office. Brought up in the good old-fashioned belief that courage, truthfulness, and honesty in word and action are the characteristics of gentlemen, he steered clear of the sunken rocks of dissipation and riotous pleasures, but, as I have told you, his heart is susceptible, and scarcely a week passed by, after his arrival in London, that some fresh divinity did not reduce him to the verge of despair; and now, so close an observer as yourself, my intelligent companion, can see with half an eye that the present object of his adoration is that young lady, whose fancy dress and nimble bounds in that double shuffle have just aroused the gallery to a burst of applause and a vociferous encore. See how he follows her every movement with despairing eyes; observe how he clenches his fist when an actor puts his arm about her slender waist; notice how he fingers the bouquet which lies half concealed within his hat, nervous and doubting about throwing it to the present object of his affections, though he selected it with care, and paid for it with his savings this very afternoon in Covent Garden for the express purpose. He has already picked to pieces many of the choicest flowers it contains, the leaves of which lie scattered at his feet, and you will be tolerably safe in presuming that he will never summon up either courage or strength sufficient to throw it over four rows of stalls and the orchestra. If he *does* throw it, you may take it for granted that it will be at the worst of times, and that a contraction of the brow,

instead of a smile, will reward him for his act of gallantry.

As you sweep the pit, your eyes will possibly rest on that group of men standing at the back. They came in at half-price, and are occupying their opera-glasses and their time in observing and discussing the symmetry of their favourite actresses. They are evidently of the class known as 'fast.' That is to say, they dress after one another in a certain style, they cut their hair short as a convict's, they frequent disreputable places of amusement, they drink more than is good for them, they smoke more than they ought to for health's sake, they play cards and billiards for higher stakes than they can afford, and, worst of all, they cultivate a spirit of cynicism which they do not feel—a mean, paltry spirit of sneering at everything good, and crying down everything they ought to respect. You see them there, at the back of the pit, commencing the evening; when the burlesque is ended, they will adjourn to some music hall or casino, and thence to a West-end supper-room, probably concluding their evening's entertainment (?) in some still more disreputable haunt. They are 'sowing their wild oats,' they are 'seeing life,' they are 'making the most of their youth,' their apologists say; but whether their oats had not better remain unsown, and life, as they view it, unseen, is a question I ask, but leave others to discuss.

If you wish to see how a burlesque can be enjoyed—enjoyed for its wit and fun, and not for its performers' sake alone,—look at those two boys sitting far back there. They have not once turned their eyes from the stage since the curtain rose; they have not lost a single word that has been spoken; they have followed every step of the comic dances, and they have stamped and clapped their hands in such vehement applause as to call for a remonstrance from that choleric old gentleman sitting behind them, who is 'Disgusted, sir, positively disgusted at the degradation of the drama' and would get out and go home if he were not so tightly wedged in as to render motion

next to impossible. He has lost his temper and his pocket-handkerchief; he is indignant and uncomfortable; and neither Miss Duckham's songs, nor Mr. Shuffle's dancing can draw from him a smile or a sign of approval. There is yet another character in the pit of the Strand this evening whose acquaintance I wish you to make. He is a very important character, too, in his own estimation, and rarely condescends to express approval by more than a depreciatory simper. Do you know him? No? Why that is one of our best burlesque actors—at least he would be, he says, if the public would recognize amateur talent. His acquaintance is sought after a good deal by ladies and gentlemen wishing to give private theatricals, but without the slightest idea how to manage them. He sets them right, appropriates the best characters for himself, and rante and raves, dancing out of time, and singing out of tune, applauded to the echo by enraptured guests, who, having been told in a mysterious whisper that he is the 'famous' Mr. Blank, refuse to be guided by their own judgment, and bear tribute to the fame of one of the silliest and most absurd of would-be actors in the country. Look at him now, full of self-conceit, saying doubtless to himself, 'Put me on these boards, give me a fair chance before a British public, and see how I will electrify them.' There, now! he has turned and is pushing his way out of the theatre in apparent disgust. Good luck go with him!

I see by the bill you hold in your hand, my dear Lounger, that we have already arrived at the last scene of the burlesque; so, ere you shut up your glasses, just sweep round the remainder of those pit seats, and tell me who you see besides those to whom we have paid particular attention.

There, to your left, is an old lady with a basket, from which peeps a bottle-neck. She has hardly heard a word of the burlesque, owing to a quarrel with a mild young gentleman sitting next her, respecting the right to a certain seat. You will observe that she is now purple with anger and heat, and that her

of the world, and the progress of the human mind, from the earliest times to the present day. The history of the world is a long and varied one, and the progress of the human mind is a continuous one. The history of the world is a record of the struggles of the human race for freedom, justice, and peace. The progress of the human mind is a record of the discoveries and inventions of the human race. The history of the world is a story of the triumphs and defeats of the human race. The progress of the human mind is a story of the triumphs and defeats of the human race. The history of the world is a story of the triumphs and defeats of the human race. The progress of the human mind is a story of the triumphs and defeats of the human race.

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Drawn by F. W. Sloger.

AN ILLUMINATED PAGE,

AND



A PAGE OF MODERN TYPE.

[See "The Two Pages."

opponent, notwithstanding the grand way in which he pretends to hear none of her sarcasms, is far from comfortable in the place he occupies, despite the fierce attacks of the old lady. Behind them, again, is another couple. They have heard but little of the play, either, so much have they found to whisper into each other's ears, disregarding the frowns and angry remonstrances of those about them, and the jeering allusions to a ring and a clergyman, made by a would-be wag in an audible whisper. Besides these, there is a soldier with his betrothed, a father with his son, a score of young men with eye-glasses, a dozen young women in hats, and a very fair number of middle-aged men, some stupid, some asleep, but many appreciative. See now, as the curtain rolls slowly down, how

old and young alike clap their hands together in token of approval; and listen how the juniors shout frantically for their favourites to come before the baize and bow their acknowledgments. The curtain rises and falls a second time, the applause dies away, and there is a scuffling for hats and cloaks, and a rush for the door. There is a farce to come yet. Shall we wait and see it? No? Then let us adjourn.

I much fear, my friend, that you, to whom doubtless the salons of the nobility are open, will have found playhouse society in the Strand pit hardly to your taste; but take courage. The Opera season will soon commence, and in a stall at Her Majesty's you shall reap the reward for your patience this evening.

As I said before, let us adjourn and sup together at the club.

THE TWO PAGES.

LIKE a missal, all ablaze
With the gold and colours blended,
Shine the gay chivalric days
In the hazy distance splendid.

Maidens veiled in yard-long hair,
Knights in golden armour flashing,
Glow of pennons in the air,
Gleam of falchions ever clashing,—

And the volume to complete,—
Volume lettered 'Middle Ages,'—
Bright at every heroine's feet
Lie illuminated Pages!

Glittering in their iris hues,
Hawk on wrist, with bells and jesses,
Eyes of liquid browns or blues,
Maiden cheeks and maiden tresses.

Fond of joust and fond of brawl—
Dagger out ere word is spoken—
Life of bower, and life of hall,
Youth's free spirit all unbroken.

Singing to the twangling lute
Minstrel ballad last in fashion,
Till the lips that should be mute,
Learn the parrot-lisp of passion.

Then beneath the pleasure walls,
(Ripe with nectarines and peaches),
To My Lady's damozels
Oft Sir Page the lesson teaches.

Eyes upon a blushing face,—
 Noting, too, a milky shoulder,—
 Arm about a resting place
 Might dismay a lover bolder.

Of his heart and its despair,
 Vowing much and much protesting,
 Till so much of love is there,
 Only half of it is jesting.

Happy Page, who thus can move
 In a round of bright enjoyment—
 Happy to whom song and love
 Represent life's sole employment!

But from this the glowing past
 And its splendours evanescent,
 Let our dazzled eyes be cast
 Over Life's superior present.

With these ages wholly ripe,
 With these days of faster movement
 Comes a Page of modern type,
 Showing every last improvement,—

Comes a maiden whom we sing,
 Whom we laud in songs and sonnets,
 Leads a greyhound by a string,
 Wears the cream of Paris bonnets.

At her heels our iris Page,
 On these days prosaic stranded,
 Flashes buttons, flashes gold,—
 Round his hat superbly banded.

Banished from his lady's side,
 He ignored and quite eschew'd is,—
 Bears a parcel, pack-thread tied,
 Carries home a book from Mudie's;

And if softly in his ears
 'Hither, Page!' the lady mutter,
 'Tis that for her hound she fears,
 Or needs aid to cross a gutter.

Or of shopping she is tired
 (Seeking trifles to adorn her),
 And the brougham is required—
 Waiting for her round the corner.

So our sprightly Page, at last
 Wholly changed in each essential,
 Haply to atone the past,
 Finds a present penitential.

As for love—does he but own
 Half the warmth of bygone ages,
 To the door he would be shown—
 With no mention of his wages.

W. S.



AN EVENING WITH MY UNCLE.

HOW I first came to know Uncle Gawler, how it happened that our acquaintance, at first of the simplest sort, ripened gradually to a friendship warm and durable, need not be here discussed. It is sufficient for the purposes of this paper to state that between my uncle and myself such a happy condition of affairs prevails. The act of parliament which regulates the times and seasons during which my uncle may transact business with his numerous other poor relations in no way affects me; indeed it is more often 'after seven' than before that I make my calls, and I am always welcome. The strong spring-bolt that secures the flap-door of my uncle's shop counter is cheerfully withdrawn at my approach, giving me free access to the sanctum beyond—where the money-till with its silver 'well,' as large as a washing-bowl, and its gold 'well,' bigger than a quart basin, is always ajar; where on back counters, and shelves, and bunks are strewn rings, and pins, and brooches, and lockets, and bracelets (all solid and good gold, as attested by the grim glass bottle labelled 'aquafortis,' conveniently perched on its little bracket), where deep drawers, open just a little, reveal countless tiny and precious packets, done up in brown paper, and white paper, and stout bits of rag, and patched with a blue, or a red, or a yellow ticket, to indicate the number of pounds sterling that have been advanced on them; where watches, gold and silver, lie heaped together in a living heap, as one may say, each one hobbled to a pawn ticket, and left to die, but not yet dead, but, faithful in the discharge of its duty, clamorously 'tick, tick, ticking,' though nobody now takes the least interest in its time-keeping, nor minds its urgent whispering of the flight of time any more than the angler minds the gasping of the fish he has just landed. Were I a sentimental writer (which, thank goodness, I am not), and this a sentimental article, I have no doubt that a very pretty

paragraph might be written on these faithful little monitors consigned to dungeon darkness and the stillness of death for just so long a time as may suit the convenience of the tyrant man. Torn from the bosom where they had so long lain nestling; abandoned by the hand that gave them life and motion, there they lie, true even unto death, the uncompromising, though somewhat astonished 'tick, tick' of the English lever; the plethoric and muffled tones of the old-fashioned 'hunter' of the mechanic; the spasmodic whimpering of the wretched Gancose, reminding one of—of—(not being ready with a happy simile I turn to Mr. Gawler, who is churchwarden, and who promptly suggests) cases of desertion on doorsteps.

It must not, however, be inferred from the above statement of the wealth in my Uncle Gawler's possession that he is as well-to-do in the world as many other of my relations in the same degree. He is not, for instance, as rich as my Uncle Attenborough, whose meanest place of business is a palace compared with that in which my poorer uncle carries on his trade. Uncle Attenborough affects plate glass and green and gold ornamentation, and informs you, through the medium of off-hand little notice-boards in his window, what is his price—per peck—for pearls and diamonds, and what he can give, per ton, for Australian bullion. Should the keeper of the crown jewels call on Uncle Attenborough, and request the fullest possible advance on them, he would no doubt be packed off with a satisfactory 'ticket.'

Such matters, however, are altogether above Uncle Gawler. He makes no pretension to dealing in diamonds, or foreign bullion, or sculpture or paintings by the old masters. It is a wonder, considering the locality in which his business is carried on—near Whitecross Street, St. Luke's—that so much valuable property is confided to his keeping; and, doubtless, the fact is mainly due—firstly, to the great number of

years he has been established; and, secondly, to the convenient arrangement of his premises. It is a corner house, and the shop, which faces the High Street, is an innocent jeweller's shop, and nothing more. There are neatly-written cards in the window, variously inscribed, 'jewellery repaired,' 'watch glasses fitted,' 'ladies' ears pierced,' &c.; so that even though one should happen to be seen entering Mr. Gawler's shop,—nay, even though an inquisitive brate should be mean enough to spy from outside, and see one hand his 'Dent' to Mr. Gawler, and receive in exchange for it a neatly-folded bit of pasteboard, the evidence of the pawning would be anything but complete; watch glasses will come to grief, and watch works need repair, and it is the commonest thing in the world for the watchmaker to give the owner a memorandum, as security for his property. I have known fellows in the Strand take the 'Angel' omnibus on purpose to avail themselves of the services of Mr. Gawler.

But it is not on watch and jewel and trinket-pawners that Mr. Gawler relies for the support of his business. The street, of which my uncle's shop forms the corner, is one of the most densely populated streets in London. It is a market street, a street of shops, abounding in 'courts,' and 'alleys,' and 'yards,' with entrances like accidental chinks in the wall, and swarming with men, and women, and children, as rats swarm in a sewer. It is a roaring street for business; there are twenty-two butchers' shops in it, seventeen bakers' shops, and twenty-seven gin shops and beer shops. So it may easily be imagined that Uncle Gawler does his share of trade.

He is well prepared for it. Up the street by the side of the innocent-looking jeweller's shop—a longish way up the street—is a mean-looking doorway, that might be the entrance to a back yard. That it is something more than this, however, may be at once perceived by the stone threshold worn through to the bricks beneath, and the doorpost paint-rubbed and grimy of elbow grease. This is the poor pawner's

entrance. It opens on to a passage, extending down the whole length of which is a row of latched doors, close together and hinge to hinge. There are eleven of these doors, and they belong to as many 'boxes' or compartments about four feet wide and ten deep, boarded on each side, and with a portion of counter (boarded, of course, from the top downwards) in front. There is a little bolt on the inside of the cell door, so that if a customer desires privacy he can secure himself from observation until his negotiation with the pawnbroker is completed. This precaution is—at least as regards the daytime—quite superfluous; for when the door is closed, the closet is dark as evening, making it next to impossible for any one to recognise his neighbour, except by the sound of his voice. I have said that each closet is fronted by a portion of the long counter which extends from one end of the pawning compartment to the other—I should rather have said that it is a ledge raised a foot above the level counter that faces the customer, the said raised ledge being, doubtless, intended as a check against the evil disposed, who might be tempted to advantage themselves of the bustle of much business, and walk off with their own or their neighbours' unransomed goods.

Against the wall opposite to the boxes, and facing the middle one, the 'spout' is built. The 'spout' at a pawnbroker's, as the gentle reader will please to understand, is a boxed-in space penetrating the upper warehouse floors, and contrived for the more ready delivery of pledged goods; which consisting, as they usually do among poor folks, of wearing apparel, and boots, and shoes, and bed-linen, may be collected from their various places of stowage and bundled by the dozen through the aperture in question from the top of the house to the bottom. To accommodate Uncle Gawler's extensive business, his 'spout' was of enormous size. The opening was as large as a kitchen chimney, and to two sides of it upright ladders were fixed.

Astraddle over the hole on the top floor was a windlass with a stout rope and a chain and a couple of hooks depending from it. This was used to wind up the sackfull of pledged bundles, and no doubt saved a vast amount of labour. About the spare spaces (very few) of Uncle Gawler's shop walls were stuck various placards and business notices: one relating to the rates of interest allowed by law; one or two relating to recent instances of prosecution, and conviction, of persons pawning the property of others without their permission, and of other persons who had endeavoured to foist upon the unsuspecting pawnbroker 'Brummagem' ware, reputed to be honest gold or silver. There were other placards more or less curious, but none more so than one which in red and conspicuous letters, bore the mysterious announcement that 'there could be no parting after eleven o'clock.' A solution, however, to this mystery, and many others, appeared in the course of the evening I passed with Uncle Gawler.

How I came to enjoy that rare privilege I will explain in a few words. Although my calls at the shop in St. Luke's were not unfrequent, they had invariably taken place on some other day than Saturday. It was a real pleasure to call and see Uncle Gawler: he was always so filled with contentment and gratitude. 'How was he getting on?' 'Oh, nicely, thanky—very nicely; a little overdone with work, that's all: small cause for complaint you think, eh, young fellow? Ah! but the amount of business to be attended to in this place is enormous, sir—en-normous!'. And then he would cast his eyes towards the long row of 'boxes,' and from them to the mighty 'spout,' with the cable and the chain and hooks dangling down, and sigh a pleasant sigh, and jingle the keys in his pocket.

He said this, or something very like, so often, that one could not help looking about him for symptoms of the enormous business Uncle Gawler made so much of. Looking about for these symptoms he failed,

to discover them. Although there was kept up a pretty constant clamouring of the box-doors, and a briskish clamour of 'serve me, please,' 'it's my turn,' and 'ain't that there come down yet?' the eleven boxes were never a quarter filled, and never at any time had I dropped in at such a time of pressure that Mr. Gawler was unable, to tuck his hands under his coat-tails and gossip for half an hour, while his two young men plodded along, the one examining and valuing articles brought to pawn, and the other making out the deposit-tickets and handing over the money, but with very little show of excitement. This circumstance, coupled with another, viz., that Uncle Gawler was invariably as unruffled as regards his habiliments as though he had just dressed for an evening party, drove me to the conclusion that either the worthy old gentleman possessed a marvellous aptitude for getting through an 'enormous amount' of business with perfect ease, or else that he was slightly given to exaggeration. At last came the eventful evening when my unworthy suspicions were vanquished, and my belief in Uncle Gawler established more firmly than ever.

It was a Saturday evening and the time of year was July. I had not met Uncle Gawler for several days, and it happening that a friend had kindly given me an order for the admission for two on the Adelphi Theatre, I thought it would be a good opportunity for a manifestation of my regard for him. It was rather late, 'bat,' thought I, 'he is sure to be ready dressed, and he will only have to pop on his hat and we may be off at once.' Entering Uncle Gawler's shop I was immediately struck with astonishment, not to say awe. The two young men were there—Uncle Gawler was there, but how changed! No longer was he an elderly gentleman dressed for an evening party, but a person whose avocation it was to put down mob risings, to quell riots, to stop prize-fights, and who, calmly confident, expected each moment to be called on. It was his custom to wear a black satin stock and a dia-

mond pin; these were cast aside, and, only for the neck-band of his shirt, his throat was bare. Ever before I had seen him in a coat of the glossiest black; now he wore no coat at all, but a waistcoat with tight black holland sleeves, like a porter at a paper-warehouse. Usually he was particular as to the arrangement of his hair, so that the side-pieces were cunningly coaxed upwards to conceal the nakedness of his crown; this, however, was no time for an indulgence of such weaknesses, and his stubbly, iron-grey locks appeared in the same state of delightful confusion they were originally thrown into by the bath-towel.

Whatever was Mr. Gawler's object, it was evident at a glance that both his young men were prepared to second him while breath remained in their bodies. Like their master, they had thrown aside their neckerchief, but, unlike him, they were without black holland sleeves to their waistcoats, and wore their shirt-sleeves rolled back above their elbows. And all for what? Never before had I found Uncle Gawler's shop so peaceful. With the exception of one, the eleven boxes were quite empty, and the exception was provided in a shape no more formidable than that of a young laundress, who was redeeming a brace of flat irons, and mildly remonstrating with Mr. Gawler's assistant concerning their condition, while the young man, with equal politeness, was endeavouring to exonerate the firm from the charge of being 'beastly damp' (that being the basis of the young woman's argument), but was compelled ultimately to fall back on the saving clause printed on every pawn-ticket, 'that Mr. Gawler was not answerable for moth or rust.'

'How do?' said Uncle Gawler. 'Pretty time to call, of all times in the week, upon my word!' Saying this, he consulted his watch, and, apparently alarmed to find it so late, immediately rushed to the 'spout' and bawled up it, 'Now, you lads! make haste about your tea; there isn't a minute to spare!'

'Why, what may be the matter?'

I asked. 'Anything unusual about to happen?'

'Oh no, nothing unusual—the regular thing of Saturday night,' replied Uncle Gawler, pushing his muscular arms further through his waistcoat-sleeves, as though not at all afraid of the 'regular thing,' but, on the contrary, rather anxious for its approach. 'You won't stay, of course,' continued he; 'they'll be here like a swarm of bees presently, you know, and I shan't have a minute to myself for the next five hours.'

At this moment several of the 'box' doors were heard to open and fall to again with a slam, at which signal Mr. Gawler started and held out his hand to say good-bye. It was evident that those who would presently arrive like a swarm of bees were customers. It was for their reception that my uncle and his assistants had prepared themselves, and taken off their neckcloths and rolled back their sleeves. My resolution was at once taken.

'Shall I be much in your way if I stay for an hour?' I asked.

'My dear fellow!' began Uncle Gawler, while his two young men looked round with astonishment.

'I could sit in the parlour and look through the window,' I suggested. 'I won't disturb you: I'll sit in there as quiet as a mouse.'

'Well, go in if you like,' said Uncle Gawler, after a moment's hesitation; 'you'll soon be glad to get out again, I'll warrant.'

So I went into the little parlour and took a chair at the window in the wall that commanded a fair view of the shop from one end to the other. Especially there was a fair view of the boxes, and, to my surprise, although but five minutes had elapsed since the slamming of the first of the eleven doors had begun, at least forty customers had already assembled. Although, owing to the deep gloom in which the interior of each box was shrouded, it was difficult to make out the figures of the customers, it was easy enough to count their number, for one and all had thrust out a hand containing a small pack of tickets of redemption. It was an odd sight to see this long

row of grimy fists and tattered gown and jacket and coat-cuffs all poking towards the shopman and beckoning him coaxingly. However, there was no favouritism. It was quite useless for the owners of the gown-cuffs to address the young man in familiar, not to say affectionate, language, calling him 'David,' and even 'Davy' ('Davy, dear,' one woman called him), or for the jacket-cuffs to growl and adjure David to 'move himself.' David had a system, and he well knew that the least departure from it would be fatal to the proper conduct of the business of the evening. Beginning at box number one he began the collection of the little squares of pasteboard with both his hands, and 'hand-over-hand,' as one may say, with a dexterity only to be acquired by constant practice, crying out 'tickets! tickets! tickets!' the while. By the time he had perambulated the length of the shop and called at all the boxes he had gathered as many tickets as his fists would hold, and at once turned to a back counter where stood John (the other shopman). John and David then engaged in 'sorting' the tickets, an operation rendered necessary for several reasons. Some of the tickets referred to tools and flat irons and articles of furniture too cumbersome and unwieldy to ascend the 'spout,' and which were accommodated with lodgings in the cellars. Other of the pawn-tickets related to wedding-rings and Sunday brooches and scarf-pins, which were deposited in the room whose walls were mailed with sheet-iron in the rear of the shop. Another reason why the tickets should be sorted was this. A goodly proportion of Uncle Gawler's customers were unacquainted with the art of reading, and not unfrequently tendered tickets pertaining to goods in the custody of another 'uncle' keeping a shop in the neighbourhood, an error if not at once detected likely to lead to a great waste of time and temper.

The tickets sorted, a heavy and melancholy youth, bearing a dark lantern, opportunely emerged from the bowels of the premises through a trap-door in the shop floor, and

took into custody the tickets relating to shovels and picks, and saws and planes; while John bustled off with another lantern and the jewellery tickets, and David remained to attend to the 'spout' department. Lapping out at the mouth of the spout, and waving gently to and fro, like the busy tongue of the ant-eater, was a long leather bag; into this David thrust his handful of cards, and at the same instant briskly touched a bell-handle fixed to the side of the 'spout,' and, with a sudden jerk, the tongue vanished upwards into the maw; to return, however, long and lean as ever, and dangling and wagging as though it had just caught the flavour of the food it was remarkably fond of, and much desired some more.

It must not be supposed that Uncle Gawler himself was meanwhile idle. Redemption was the order of the evening; still, there were numerous cases in which it was necessary rather by way of barter than by ready-money payments. As, for instance, Mrs. Brown, being a laundress, has found it necessary to pawn the table-linen belonging to one of her customers, and, not having money at her command to redeem the same, she feels it convenient to 'put away' the shirts of another customer, and thus make matters square. On Monday she will redeem the shirts of customer number two, by pawning the sheets of customer number three. Or, again, as for instance, the Browns are asked by the Greens to come and have a bit of dinner to-morrow, and have accepted the invitation; but Brown has made a bad week; has not earned enough, indeed, to 'get out' his Sunday coat and the children's frocks. Brown is a man who doesn't like 'to look little.' He won't want his working clothes till Monday; and, as they will be from home, they won't miss the hearthrug. Again, there are exceptions to the rule altogether. Saturday night is a ticklish time for poor mother. No work this week—last week—the week before. Not a single penny. No dinner to-morrow—no dinner on a *Sunday*! Mother does not

care. Father does not care—much; but the children! It is all very well to rub along all the week with bread and treacle for the mid-day meal, or, at a pinch, with nothing between breakfast and an 'early tea;' but it is different on Sundays. *Everybody* has dinner on Sunday, even in a Whitecross Street alley; the atmosphere is hazy with the steam of 'bakings;' and by two o'clock you won't find a little pinafore that is not dinner-stained. 'It's of no use,' says poor mother, 'a bit of hot dinner must be got *somehow*.' So she waits till dusk, and then, slipshod in old slippers, carries her sound shoes to Mr. Gawler's and places them on the counter.

This sort of work keeps Uncle Gawler tolerably busy, while his young men are busy restoring the pledged goods; but he is not nearly so busy as he will be presently. By this time the slamming of the box-doors has increased, and a quick succession of dull bumps and thumps announces the descent down the 'spout' of parcels of all sorts and sizes from the various warehouses above. John has returned with the lantern in one hand and a bunch of little packets in the other; and three times the gloomy boy has laboured up the cellar steps, laden with ironware and tools, which he has deposited, with a malicious clatter, upon the shop floor, and once more retreated. The eleven boxes are gradually filling; and from out their gloomy depths, where the clatter and chatter is each moment increasing, there crops a thick cluster of ticket-grasping fists, wriggling to be delivered. But it is not time yet to gather in this second crop: the result of the first, which chokes up the spout, has yet to be cleared off.

This part of the performance is conducted by the indefatigable David. Hauling and tugging at the rag-wrapped bundles that bulge out at the mouth of the spout, he rapidly ranges them, ticket upward (it should have been stated that a duplicate of the ticket held by the pawner is pinned on to the property pawned, and that, when the searchers have found the bundle

to which the ticket put into the bag refers, he pins it by the side of the ticket already distinguishing it), and then begins to call out the name the duplicate bears.

'Jones!'

'One; here you are,' somebody calls.

'Three and sevenpence-halfpenny, Jones;' and in a twinkling the money passes one way, and the parcel the other, and Jones is dismissed.

'Robinson! how many, Mrs. Robinson?'

'Five.'

Mrs. Robinson must wait: when the other four bundles happen to turn up, she will get her 'five,' not before; so, putting her first discovered bundle aside, David continues his investigation.

'Mackney! How many, Mackney? Mack-ney!—how many more times am I to holloa?'

'Is it McKenny ye mane?' shouts a shrill voice.

'Well, p'raps it is: what's the article?' inquires the cautious David.

'Siveral,' pipes Mrs. McKenny; 'there's the childers' perrikits, and me ole man's weskit, and a shawl, and——'

'Two and a halfpenny,' exclaims David, cutting the lady cruelly short.

'But I want to part, Davy dear,' said the Irishwoman.

'Why didn't you say so at first?' snapped David, and at the same time tossing the monstrously large two-shilling bundle towards Uncle Gawler.

Uncle Gawler at once seized it, unpinned it, and disclosed petticoats, and shawl, and waistcoat, besides several other articles.

'I want the weskit and shawl, and leave the rist for fifteen pence,' said Mrs. McKenny.

'Ninepence is what you can leave 'em for,' replied Uncle Gawler, with a determination that Mrs. McKenny had not the courage to combat; 'one and four, please.' And having paid this sum, she walked off with the shawl and waistcoat. This at once explained the meaning of the mysterious placard, 'No parting after eleven o'clock.' It was evident

enough that the process of 'parting' was not a little tiresome, and calculated to hamper and impede business if allowed at the busiest time.

The first delivery of pledges over, the second crop of tickets was gathered; and so much heavier was it than the first, that by the time he had reached the sixth box, David's hands were quite full. Big as was the leather bag suspended in the 'spout,' it was chokeful when David thrust in his gathering; and before five minutes had elapsed, the noise of falling bundles within the spout was fast and furious. Tear and haul at them as David might—even with the assistance, slow but determined, of the melancholy cellar-boy—the lads above, now well warmed to their work, were not to be outdone, but kept up the shower, pelt, bump, thump, until the throat as well as the mouth of the spout was fairly choked. Still, in flocked the customers, until there was no more door-slamming, for the boxes were crammed and brimming over into the passage; and the number of ticket-grasping fists that threatened over the counter was enough to appal any but such tried veterans as Uncle Gawler and his crew. Then the uproar! Small-voiced women, of the better sort, begging and entreating of David to take their tickets, at the same time pouring into his adder ears the various domestic businesses on which their need for haste were based. Shrill-voiced women of the worse sort, dirty-faced, baby-bearing, gin-hic-

cuppy slatterns, brawling, pushing, driving their elbows into other people's eyes, and trampling on their feet. Drunken men who had never given any ticket at all, and who yet obstinately persisted in blocking up the front and most desirable places, taking great oaths, banging their great fists against the counter, and challenging David into the road to fight. Great indeed must have been the joy of David and John when eleven o'clock struck, and Uncle Gawler shouted 'no more parting!' and, whipping off his sleeved waistcoat, came to their assistance. He was a host in himself. By a few pertinent remarks as to what would be the probable result of their outrageous behaviour when they brought their things back to pledge on Monday morning, he silenced the vixens; and by emphatically declaring that he would not deliver another parcel to his customers until they turned out the noisy drunken men, he got rid of them in a twinkling. He assailed the glutton 'spout,' and delivered bundles in batches of six and eight, and counted up the interest, and took money, and gave change with a celerity that took away one's breath to behold. In half an hour the box doors began again to slam—a sure sign that the rush was thinning: in another twenty minutes he had so slackened the pressure as to find time to come in to me, mopping the perspiration off his scarlet visage with his silk handkerchief, and inquire what I thought of it all.

JAMES GREENWOOD.

A WINTER AT ST. PETERSBURG.

THE class is but a small one to which the winter months do not bring their full share of labour at home, and even of those who cast over the pages of Murray in search of winter quarters, many are invalids compelled to make the pursuit of health their first consideration, who naturally take flight towards the sunny south, and settle on the sheltered coast of the Mediterranean, or in some of the warm regions of southern France.

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The number, then, is limited who can open a gazeteer uninfluenced by any previous bias, and follow the exact course their fancy dictates. To this class especially, desirous of seeing something totally new, and not too much trammelled by considerations of health and purse, we would desire to suggest a residence where, if they delight in the novelty of observing a new people and hearing a new language, they may gratify their wishes and enjoy at the same

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time an unlimited amount of skating, sledging, descending ice mountains, and similar pastimes characteristic of the far north.

The country to which we allude is Russia, concerning which distant land prejudices are rife in England, and which is only now, through railway communication, beginning to be opened up to travellers from the west.

St. Petersburg may be reached in three days and a half from London Bridge, or, with a night's rest at Berlin, in five days. The former journey is far too fatiguing to be undertaken by any but the very strong, and even then the urgency of the motive ought to be considerable. The journey of five days, for those who are already acquainted with Belgium and Prussia, or do not care to linger there, is quite practicable. For ladies, however, we would recommend more frequent stoppages, and, above all, should the trip be a winter one, a plentiful supply of furs for that part of the journey beyond Berlin. Brussels, Cologne, Berlin, and Königsberg will be found convenient halting-places. Between the latter city and St. Petersburg there is an unavoidable run of thirty hours, unless the traveller have the hardihood to seek the shelter of the hotel at Düna-bourg without a knowledge of Russ.

Ice and snow are hardly necessary to invest the north-eastern plains of Germany with a dreariness which seems inherent to their flat, sandy expanses, and which, as the traveller advances towards the frontier, borrow more and more bleakness from the vast marshy deserts of the neighbouring Russian Empire.

If the transition, so far as external nature is concerned, be a gradual one, the contrast in all that regards human society and habitations is sudden and glaring, and every sight and sound helps to remind the traveller that he is leaving behind him the effects of a hundred years of civilization, and turning over a leaf of European life separated by at least that period from the page just perused.

The whole appearance of the frontier station of Wirballen, or by

its Russian name, Wierzbolow, is calculated to depress the traveller from the west. The indescribable indigence of the mass of the travellers, the inferiority of the refreshments, the absence of the comest comforts in the waiting-rooms, and the gruffness of the custom-house officials, combine to discourage the Englishman who is about to cross the threshold of all the Russias. It is in such situations that the blessings of steam communication come most forcibly before the mind, and he who wearies of this northern journey may imagine for his consolation some ten weary days and nights spent in a sledge in former days between the Prussian and Russian capitals, at an expense of about twenty-five pounds. At present the cost of the railway journey, in very comfortable carriages, does not exceed seven pounds, and the time occupied is forty-eight hours. Beyond Wirballen each carriage contains a stove, and the occupants are far more likely to suffer from heat than cold.

The approach to St. Petersburg by land has none of the charm which rewards the summer traveller after six days' tossing on the North Sea and the Baltic, when the golden dome of St. Isaac's Church rises gleaming out of the horizon, and the magnificent river Neva, with its noble quays and sparkling waters, first meets the eye. The appearance of the town from the railway-station tends, on the contrary, to confirm the somewhat dismal impression made by the welcome at the frontier, and it is only when standing on one of the quays, favoured by a bright sun and clear atmosphere, that the really beautiful features of the city are discerned. St. Petersburg is grand in its general effects, though the impression fades away when the great thoroughfares are forsaken for the remoter parts, where a monotonous Asiatic mode of existence reigns supreme, and where the vast 'prospects,' as the Russians term their largest streets, appear, owing to the sparse population, yet vaster than they really are.

The hotels of St. Petersburg will

not fail to demonstrate in a very unmistakable manner the backward civilization of Russia. They are dear, ill provided with comforts, and dirty. The English traveller will act judiciously, if he speaks no Russ, in going to Miss Benson's hotel on the English quay, where there are very fairly good rooms, with civil attendance, and English cookery. This is a boarding-house, and a somewhat motley assemblage of guests breakfast and dine together. Here, however, an Englishman's most ordinary wants will not be regarded with such blank astonishment as in the purely Russian hotels. For a residence of any length, furnished lodgings, with a German or French servant, are the most desirable quarters.

The town is situated on either bank of the Neva, both of which are lined with fine quays of Finnish granite. The river is here about six hundred yards wide and fifty feet deep. Its waters form nearly the only outlet both of Lake Ladoga, itself one hundred and fifty miles long, and of the immense system of Finnish lakes known as the Seima. The stream is clear and beautiful, and to it the city owes much of its majesty. The houses are chiefly of stone, and in only four cities of Russia do stone edifices preponderate. Unfortunately, however, most of the public buildings are adorned with stucco fronts, as, for instance, the Admiralty, a vast structure which extends for a great distance along the left bank of the Neva. The town is upwards of four miles in length, though comparatively narrow. Its population does not greatly exceed half a million, but varies considerably in summer and winter, owing to the influx of peasants seeking for employment during the latter and longer half of the year. Among the Russian population there can hardly be said to be a middle class, the shopkeepers being either very humble, or entitled, owing to the vastness of their trade, to rank rather with the upper than the middle stratum of society. This state of things is fruitful of evils, and to it may be ascribed the fact that there is among the Russians

properly scarcely any medium between luxury and want. Education has not yet been diffused throughout the masses, and whilst this remains the case, the progress of the nation must be slow. The influence of the large German population is in this respect a good one, for wherever the colonists from the Baltic provinces of Esthonia and Livonia have settled, either in town or country, they have both themselves succeeded, and have set a good example to the inhabitants. An edict of Peter the Great provided that none but Germans were to follow the trades of bakers or chemists; no doubt owing to the fact that these trades demand a greater amount of conscientious care and attention to details than the Russian character could boast of a century ago. The law has long been repealed, but the fact remains that both these trades, and the greater number of the profession of physicians, as also the bulk of the men of science resident in the country, are Germans. It is said that one of the few occupations for which the true Muscovite mind shows a strong spontaneous leaning is that of driving, in which great excellence may be generally remarked. They have likewise in great vigour the constructive faculty so common amongst Orientals, and country carpenters will execute the most complicated pieces of cabinet work with wonderful accuracy to pattern. Invention, and what the French call 'initiative,' they lack, and this applies no less to literature than to matters of physical skill.

The character of the great mass of the Russian people is little known in England, for of course none but the upper classes are to be met with in western Europe. We consider the former to be the superiors of the latter, who are in truth rendered soft and indolent by luxury. It has been justly observed that the extreme of cold is far from producing the same bracing effects as the more moderate mountain air which nerves the Highland gillie; it rather causes the mass of the inhabitants to resign themselves to the severity of the climate, and, instead of combating the cold by exercise, to pass seven

or eight months of the year wrapped in mountains of fur, and in total muscular inaction. When this mode of life is accompanied, as it generally is, by luxurious living, late hours, constant smoking, and the consumption of an unlimited number of bonbons, it is not difficult to account for the frequent illness, and the look of listlessness and joylessness so characteristic of the country. The peasantry, which, of course, forms the great mass of the sixty millions figuring in geography books as the population of European Russia, and which supplies the raw material for her vast armies, is of the resigned and apathetic disposition naturally engendered by three unfavourable influences working together—a spiritless religion, an absolutely despotic government, and profound ignorance. They are, speaking generally, of a mild disposition, which is, however, modified by an enormous consumption of 'vodka,' or native brandy. Owing, however, to his placid character, the Russian 'moujik' is rarely violent when intoxicated; his inebriation generally induces an excess of tenderness, and he may be frequently observed staggering along with his arm round his latest acquaintance's neck.

Though hating the conscription, and using every means in his power to avoid being enlisted, the Russian soldier is justly noted for his cool intrepidity and courage of the more passive sort, and for extraordinary powers of endurance.

A subject interesting to all strangers is the expense of a Russian residence. This, though really very large, is often exaggerated. The great causes of the dearness are—first, that so many articles of consumption must be imported from a great distance; and, secondly, that owing to the severity of the climate, and the backwardness of civilization, many things which are luxuries in western Europe, are indisputable necessities in St. Petersburg. This applies, of course, with great force to a short residence, because many things are bought once for all, and last long. For a gentleman intending to go into society, an outfit of furs,

costing at least 30*l.*, is essential, and equally requisite is a carriage and pair, either for a married or single man, with a sledge for the months when the snow covers the ground; that is, about one third of the year. The best coat is a very thickly wadded one, reaching well below the knees, with a beaver collar only, which costs about 15 guineas, and in which walking is quite practicable. A beaver cap, costing about 4*l.*, is a necessary addition. Besides this, the traveller must possess a loose cloak, reaching to the ankles, lined with thick fur, and furnished with a hood to cover the whole head. This is for sledge driving in intense cold, and if fortunate, he may obtain one of these 'schools' second-hand for about 10*l.* If any ice boating be indulged in, a sheepskin is also required, value about 2*l.* A sledge had better be bought for a long, and hired for a short residence. A carriage and horses are always better hired, and may be had very fairly good for about 125 roubles, or 18*l.* per month. The first necessities of life, such as bread and meat, are cheap; everything approaching to comfort or luxury is dear, especially public amusements, wines, and dress for both sexes. On the whole, it may be said that the same amount of comfort is attainable by a single man in London for half the money. To a married man this does not apply, because expenses are not doubled, servants' wages and the primary household expenses being moderate, and the same carriage serving for two as for one. House-rent is in every case enormously expensive, about half as dear again as in Paris. Permanent residents can hardly remain at St. Petersburg in summer, and this is a new source of expense. Wealth in Russia is in the hands of the few; and those we see squandering great sums at Baden and Homburg are either members of a few really rich families, or are spending their capital. It is a mistake to suppose that riches are widely distributed, and until free trade is established, and good internal communication available, so that the resources of the country

may be developed, they will not become so. Property, as in France and Germany, is very generally subdivided among the children.

The visitor at St. Petersburg, if he have a French or German servant, will not be greatly inconvenienced by ignorance of the Russian language; for although many even of the upper classes understand nothing else, a knowledge of French and German is widely diffused. The former will be found the more useful language in society, the latter with men of business, and in shops. Some knowledge of Russ adds, of course, greatly to the traveller's pleasure; but in a residence of less than six months it is not worth while to attempt more than to acquire a familiarity with some of the common substantives and verbs, the numerals, and the like. The writer acquired considerable knowledge of the language in nine months, but this was by daily study with a master, and the above period formed only a part of a residence of several years. Much is said of the extraordinary difficulty of the Russian tongue, but we think that there is exaggeration in this respect. The grammar is difficult, and requires some three months' application to acquire a tolerable facility, but the construction is very simple, and there are none of the articles, the constant introduction of which is such a crucial test of knowledge of gender in German. On the other hand the learner is not assisted by roots derived from the Latin or any language likely to have been previously acquired. Russian is a complicated key which does not as yet open a literary Paradise sufficiently extensive or fascinating to reward a thorough acquisition of its niceties, and the principal literary works have been translated by various authors, among whom may be mentioned Sir John Bowring. The poet Puschkin is a real poet, and his writings bear some resemblance to those of Lord Byron. It may be doubted whether a diluted edition of Byron, subjected to a second watering through translation, would excite much interest in England at the present day. If not as yet fertile

in native literature, the Russians show the disposition to appreciate the productions of other nations, as the translations of really good English books are numerous. A few Russian words and phrases will show how new are the sounds meeting the ear on arrival. The numerals, one, two, three, &c., the bare knowledge of which, preceding the word rouble or kopeck, is invaluable, are in Russian as follows: ahdeen, dvah, tree, cheteere, piaht, shest, sem, vosem, deviett, deset, adinazzat, dvenattzt; a hundred is sto, a thousand teesiatoh. It has been remarked that the word 'so' is the one most frequently heard in Germany, in Russia it is certainly 'seetchahs,' 'immediatly,' which is the invariable Russian rejoinder when told to do anything. The formula of address to the drivers of the little, uncomfortable, open vehicles termed droschki, is something of this kind. The traveller names his destination. 'Sauruk kahpake,' 'forty kopecks,' says the driver; 'Dvahzatt,' 'twenty,' says the stranger; 'Neel-ziah, bahthousehka,' 'impossible, little father,' is the reply. The passenger walks on, and soon hears the horse's feet pattering behind him on the hard snow, and the offer of 'Noo, zeevoltyo,' 'well, allow me.' After a short experience, the writer found the best plan to be to seat himself and pay the just fare at the end; but this requires some knowledge of distances. Tales were at one time rife of people being taken to back streets and murdered by these drivers, but the introduction of gas and an improved system of police has put an end to this form of atrocity. Crimes of violence are, however, still frequent, and a certain number of people are said annually to disappear, being misguided enough to cross the Neva on foot at remote places on winter evenings. It is believed that these poor people are murdered and buried under the ice. The best plan for any one quite ignorant of Russ, is to conduct all transactions with respectable German or French shops, and to avoid Russian servants. By hiring a private conveyance per month, all annoyance and disputes with the

drivers for the use of their droschies and sledges is avoided. Just ten times the fare will be asked with perfect calmness, and an Englishman is sadly perplexed if he attempts to buy anything himself at the great bazaar, or 'Gahsteenee Dvor.' Imposition is the rule among the lower orders. It may be mentioned as a significant fact regarding the money dealings of the country, that few shops in St. Petersburg, however well the customer may be known, will leave the smallest article at any house until paid for. If in England, especially at the universities, the credit system is carried too far, the ready money one is equally overdone at St. Petersburg. The former is at all events more flattering to the inhabitants. The English tradesman argues, 'We are pretty sure of our principal sooner or later, and have placed it at good interest.' The Russian, 'If I don't get these fifty roubles over the counter, it is very unlikely that I shall ever do so, and my goods shall not leave my custody unpaid for.'

The amount of really high play at St. Petersburg, among people often far from rich, is one of the indications how little the value of money is thought of. It is spent as recklessly as in the United States, and unfortunately the country does not possess the same means of restoring shattered fortunes which are available in America.

A few remarks on the climate of St. Petersburg, and the degree of cold for which the traveller must be prepared, may not be out of place. Petersburg, being situated on the Gulf of Finland, and not, like Moscow, in the interior of a great continent, is considerably affected by the sea, and changes are more frequent than in that capital. The intense frosts of winter are interrupted by thaws, the short heats of summer by occasional, though not excessive rain. The average temperature from the middle of November to the middle of March is probably about 9 degrees below freezing point of Fahrenheit. In a moderate frost, St. Petersburg is delightful, for the sky is generally intensely clear and bright, and it is then that the amusements of sledg-

ing and descending ice mountains, presently to be described, can be enjoyed to the utmost. Equally detestable is a thaw, of which several occur every winter, the principal public square being in parts frequently covered with water a foot deep for days together, whilst the jolting droschky takes the place of the swift and smoothly-gliding sledge. We have described above the dress we consider most judicious, and it must not be forgotten how much the difference in clothing does to reconcile a stranger to the temperature. Indoors the comfort is complete. Double windows are universal for six months of the year, and were they used in England for three, we doubt not that colds and rheumatism would become rarer than they are. The Russian stove is quite differently managed from that employed in Germany, and if sufficiently large, need only be heated once in the day. It is filled with wood early in the morning, and several hours afterwards, when every particle of the wood has been reduced to smouldering ash, the pipe is closed by an arrangement for the purpose, and the heat thrown back into the room. This economical system, and the cheapness of firewood, render fuel a much less heavy item than might be supposed. Firewood is frequently included in the price of an apartment. Strangers should not attempt closing the stoves themselves, as the least morsel of unconsumed wood may cause the most dangerous fumes to fill the room.

Having endeavoured to put the stranger, as regards material comforts, in a position to enjoy himself, we shall now describe the recreations at his command, and the way to derive pleasure from them.

Sledging, ice-hills, skating, and ice-boating, are the chief out-door pastimes.

Sledging is of course not, as in Germany, an occasional pastime, but the universal conveyance of high and low for four months of the year. It is a serious misfortune in Russia when frost and snow come very late, for it prevents the peasants bringing to the capital the frozen provisions for all the winter

months, and induces universal stagnation in inland trade. A Russian road, at all times excessively bad, is rendered truly frightful when autumnal rains have produced one universal pulp. A good frost and a plentiful layer of snow changes everything. The rivers become highways, and thousands of carts on sledges glide with ease along the paths lately almost deserted. Locomotion becomes a great pleasure, instead of a very literal pain, and Russia and its inhabitants are seen to the best advantage. Much in this country, even in the height of summer, tends to remind the traveller of the long, deadly grip which winter keeps on the land, and which it relaxes so late and so unwillingly. Of this nature are the bridges of boats on the Neva, so constructed that they can be removed when the ice begins to collect in the river in autumn, and when its huge fragments are borne along with terrible violence in spring. The windows of the carriages on the Moscow Railway, made as small as is consistent with a moderate amount of light, show that the passengers are more concerned about warmth than scenery. To return to our account of sledging, we must inform the reader that Russian sledges are not in general ornamented, and made in the shape of swans or dragons, after the fantastic taste adopted during the short sledging season of Central Germany, but that they are in general simply boxes furnished with the necessary seats, and invariably covered with a huge bearskin, which keeps the occupant warm and comfortable. It is very common, when a party is formed to drive round the islands, or to some other part of the environs, for three horses to be harnessed abreast. This equipage is termed in Russia a 'troika,' and the three horses are likewise occasionally used with carriages on the roads in summer. The two side horses are trained to hold their heads curved outwards in a curious, and we think rather unnatural way, but the general effect of the 'troika,' the horses decked with tinkling bells, and the carriage filled with a

merry party, is very pretty, and the gay dresses contrast in a charming manner with the snow.

One of the most frequent destinations for these parties is to the ice hills on the 'Kammenoi Ostroff,' or Stony Island, of which pastime we shall give some account. At either end of a long strip of carefully-watered ice, divided by a strong wall of snow into two equal halves, is a sort of wooden tower some twenty feet high, which is ascended by means of a stair, and from the summit of which the devotee of this amusement descends a steep inclined plane of ice. The descent is effected on a very small and light iron sledge, about three feet long, covered with a soft cushion. This craft is steered by the use of the tips of the fingers alone, the hands being covered with very thick leathern gloves. For a day or two the beginner is almost invariably upset shortly after leaving the hill and entering upon the flat ice, over which the light vehicle of course glides with delightful rapidity; delightful, at least, if the pilot have acquired certainty in the art of keeping his sledge's head straight. The steering is managed by pressing lightly on the ice with the fingers of the right or left hand according to the direction wished. The learner invariably presses too much, which causes the sledge's head to assume an irretrievably wrong direction, and make straight for the bank of snow and ice fencing in the course on either hand. At this stage, all that can be done is to perish in the least violent manner possible, and to try and meet the wall of snow sideways instead of being pitched head foremost into it. A sufficiently exaggerated pressure on one side or other will cause the sledge to spin round like a tee-totum, and for the first three or four days beginners return again and again to the charge, white as millers. They of course excite great mirth at first, but persevering, generally graduate in the art by conveying ladies safely down behind them. The more heroic and resolute of their sex offer themselves first, and are followed, if they reach the other end safely, by

the diffident ones; so that a man may measure his proficiency by the amount of confidence displayed by his lady friends. Some have compared their sensations on being first hurled down this abyss to being thrown out of the window; but we think that the metaphor, to be exact, should specify one of a moderate height,—say a lowish second-floor window, because the idea of a possible prolongation of life decidedly preponderates on beginning to dash down this artificial precipice; whereas the sensation on leaving the top of a house must be unfavourable to such hopes. If, however, the feeling of being nowhere in particular can be experienced at a cheaper rate than this, the first descent of a Russian ice-hill realizes the emotion. When tolerable proficiency has been attained, it is a very agreeable amusement, and excellent exercise. The degrees of skill are—descending sitting, on the breast, on the knees, and standing. The latter cannot be accomplished alive, without bending considerably on the hill. It is averred that a gentleman descended on his head.

The average period during which skating can be enjoyed at St. Petersburg is four months, or about the same time as sledging continues practicable. It is a curious fact, that very few years ago, skating might have been said to be unknown in the Russian capital, save among the members of a small English club on the Neva. The inhabitants of St. Petersburg, who thus possess a healthy and delightful recreation ready to their hand, have always shown, and still show, the greatest apathy regarding it. About four years ago, a really good and large skating club was organized on the Neva, with extensive and well-warmed rooms on the ice for keeping and adjusting skates, and even an orchestra for a weekly band. This admirable institution induced many Russians as well as English to take to the ice as an exercise; and young and old, at every stage of proficiency, may now be seen, any tolerably mild day from November to the end of March, enjoying themselves on the wide,

glassy surface watered and smoothed by the club. The number of ladies, above all, who have become converts, is very great, and their elegant and brilliant skating dresses render the scene, on a sunny day, a most attractive one. From the constant practice they are able to have, the tyros of November generally become fair proficient by the end of the season, and the learner is not left, as in England, to mourn for a year over the backwardness of his left leg, to which no opportunity of amendment is open till another January's frost momentarily covers the Serpentine with two inches of ice. Winter once well begun in Russia, all taking thought as to the safety of the ice may be omitted till about the time Parisians begin to water their streets. Four feet is a common thickness.

The skating club above alluded to gives one or two most brilliant evening fêtes in the course of the winter, when tickets are sold to all introduced comers. These gay parties are generally honoured by the presence of the Emperor and various members of the Imperial Family, especially their Imperial Highnesses the Grand Dukes Nicholas and Leuchtenberg, the brother and nephew of the Emperor. The latter especially excels in skating, fencing, and all athletic exercises. On the occasion of these festivals, the ground is surrounded with beautiful coloured lamps, and an excellent band cheers on the fur-clad quadrille dancers. About eleven o'clock the skaters are all supplied with torches, and the distant and imaginative spectator may set down the hundreds of gleaming figures, as they glide through the darkness of the night, for a general meeting of all the Willies o' the Wisp in Europe. A species of skating unattainable in England, and best enjoyed in Holland, may, now and then, be had in perfection at St. Petersburg. This is skating a long distance straight forward. The writer skated with a friend on the 4th March, 1863, from St. Petersburg to Cronstadt. The distance, as the crow flies, is eighteen miles; but, owing to unfavourable wind, a circuit of seven miles was

necessary: the twenty-five miles being accomplished in two hours and a half. The return journey took place on the following day, under greater difficulties; for there was a strong head wind, and the run occupied three hours and three quarters. With a fair wind and a fine, smooth surface, free from cat's ice, Cronstadt may well be reached by an average skater in an hour and a half, and by a really fast one in considerably less than that time. Snow, of course, spoils the Gulf completely, and the latter does not admit of this journey oftener, on an average, than one year in six.

An ice-boat is one fixed on a triangular framework of wood, furnished at each corner with sharp skates, and rigged with a boom and a sail like those of a sloop. When the wind is very favourable and the ice smooth, a speed of thirty and even forty miles an hour may easily be attained. This is, however, a decidedly dangerous amusement, owing to the shocks to which the vessel is liable from cracks and from impediments on the ice. The cold is of course severely felt on the open gulf when no exercise is taken, and very warm clothing is imperative.

Such are the out-door amusements which are in a great degree novel and generally interesting to the English gentleman of average health and strength who visits St. Petersburg, and without them we are at a loss to conceive how the long winter would be cheered and the constitution braced to endure the cold. Walking, except on the quays, and in the great street called the Nefski Prospect, is highly monotonous. Riding, with the thermometer below zero of Fahrenheit, which it often is for many days together, tries the spirits sadly. Shooting, which, except in the immediate vicinity of the capital, is free to all, requires, owing to the immense distances, a great deal of expense and much leisure, and the game, though varied and interesting, is too thinly distributed to be worth pursuit within a reasonable distance of the town. Those who have a knowledge of the language, and who take good dogs, may find excellent sport in the regions

lying far to the north-east of St. Petersburg. Finland offers a fine field in the country beyond Tammerfors, which the writer has visited, and in summer the fishing for trout and very large salmon-trout is in parts really excellent. The beautiful rapid of Imatra, on the river Vuoksen, is well worth a visit either from the angler or the lover of the picturesque. It may be reached in about sixteen hours from St. Petersburg.

When night closes in, and the last sledge from the ice-hills has ceased to tinkle, resources are opened up in abundance to the visitor, who must of course endeavour to procure as many good letters of introduction as he can, before leaving England. He should by all means be presented at court if possible, for which purpose previous presentation in England is necessary. Without this the traveller will be unable to carry away with him the recollection of the most beautifully organised and splendid entertainments in the world. Several balls are given at the Winter Palace each season, of which at least one, and generally two, are on an enormous scale. Others are very small and exclusive, and happy is the man who is fond of really enjoyable dancing, and is invited to them. But for absolutely dazzling magnificence the first great ball of the season cannot be surpassed. The vast ball-room called the White Hall is illuminated by thirty thousand candles arranged in exquisite festoons, and the dresses and jewels are truly lovely. The men are, without exception, in some kind of uniform, from the gorgeous attire of Prince Gortchakoff and the ambassadors to the smallest Russian official who has contrived to be invited. Round this hall are long, brilliant galleries and a vast suite of apartments, through which the guests can circulate at pleasure. One of the most charming retreats is from the hot ball-room to the green and tranquil conservatory, where beautiful flowers and plants, marble statues and trickling fountains, refresh the eye and ear by the most delightful of contrasts. The

supper-room resembles rather the scenes an imaginative child conjures up when deeply immersed in the Oriental glories of the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments' than anything to be seen at the Tuileries or the Court of St. James's. The saloon is furnished with three long tables, accommodating about thirteen hundred people, which are covered with gold and silver plate, interspersed with plants, and adorned with every variety of fruit. The servants are dressed in a gay and extraordinary Oriental costume, peculiar to these occasions, and a fine band at one end of the room strikes up some well-chosen melody as the notes of the orchestra at the further end die away. We can realize how Aladdin had every sense gratified at the same moment, and how the eastern voluptuary takes no thought for the morrow but to picture to himself in his more languid moments an El Dorado of the future borrowing all its delights from the fleeting Paradise of the present.

The private balls at St. Petersburg, which take place chiefly between New-Year's Day and Easter, are numerous and brilliant, and the visitor will find hospitality an excellent Russian quality. The mazurka, universal at balls, gives them an animation and a beauty to be found nowhere else. This dance, originally Polish, has been long naturalized in Russia, and, like the Cotillon in Germany, generally finishes the ball. It lasts about an hour and a half, all the ordinary round dances being introduced. A good partner for the mazurka is a matter of prime importance. Well danced by the natives, nothing can be more graceful, but the step does not generally suit our countrymen, unless they begin very early. Few Englishmen succeed in managing their limbs with the easy, Slavonic swing required, and a picturesque Caucasian, or other somewhat wild uniform, adds much to the effect which is lost in a dress coat. A man may more easily learn to speak a foreign language with wonderful accuracy and perfect accent than to dance foreign national dances with ease and grace. An Englishman enlisted as a fourth

in a Scotch reel seldom looks 'to the manner born,' and it is fortunate that all Europeans can meet on the neutral territory of waltzes and quadrilles.

The theatres are well attended in St. Petersburg. The Italian Opera is excellent, and there is likewise a Russian Opera at the Marie Theatre, one of the largest in the world. The French and German stages are both represented, and there are two Russian performances every evening. Whilst engaged in acquiring the language the writer attended the latter, but found that the plays, dealing chiefly with the lower walks of Russian life, were rather written down to the level of the audience than calculated to elevate their taste. Classical pieces are, however, sometimes performed, and 'Hamlet,' interpreted by M. Samoiloff, is a favourite. The Russian stage is neglected by the influential class, who crowd either to the Italian Opera or to the French pieces at the Théâtre Michel, which resemble those of the Vaudeville at Paris. The Russians possess, like the French, abundant dramatic talent, and have already produced clever plays, such as the 'Revisor,' and 'Gore of Oumah.'

During Lent, concerts innumerable are the order of the day. They are as a rule indifferent and dear. The taste for the best German music has not yet become general among the Russian public; and two performances of the 'Messiah,' which took place as an experiment the winter before last in the Salle de Noblesse, were attended chiefly by Germans. Verdi is as yet in greater honour than Handel.

No stranger should omit to see some of the great ecclesiastical ceremonies, the most imposing of which of course take place at the great epochs of the Church's year. The services of the Greek Church are solemn, and the fine men's voices are well worth hearing; but to our mind the absence of an organ and the great length of the devotional exercises render them tedious. The old Slavonic tongue, from which Russian is derived, and not Russian itself, is the language employed.

The architecture, which may be seen in perfection in the Isaac's Cathedral, is massive and very richly decorated, and the exterior of the latter, overlaid with fine ducat gold, is the great ornament of the city from a distance. The peasant has universally the profoundest reverence for the Church and her ceremonies, keeping her fasts and obeying her decrees with unquestioning fidelity. Among the upper classes we think the form of belief frequently takes the place of the substance. Both for details concerning the Greek Church, and the numerous sects which have separated themselves from her, and for enlightened criticism on the position of Russia in general, we desire to refer the curious reader to the able and impartial pamphlets of the author writing

under the name of Schedo Ferrotti. Hitherto, prejudice has been a very general characteristic of writers on Russia, a country which may yet have a very great future, and which is now engaged in the useful work of gradually bringing Central Asia within the pale of civilization.

We must now take leave of St. Petersburg, and recommend the reader to visit it at the season we have described. Spring, autumn, and summer are all less favourable than the bright, keen month of January.

A visit to Moscow, for a description of which interesting city we have no space in this paper, should not be omitted. Many a beautiful sight awaits the traveller in the ancient capital of the Czars.

A. D. A.

PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES.

CHAPTER IV.

BLANCHE.

'DENBIGH Street, Belgravia,' was the address which Mrs. Lyon gave to all such correspondents as she desired to hear from. Her letters would have reached her a post or two sooner had she surrendered the truth, and permitted 'Pimlico' to appear upon the envelopes. But 'Belgravia' looked better, and Mrs. Lyon saw great cause for studying the look of things still.

'Denbigh Street, Belgravia, is my temporary abode, while my daughter is staying in the country,' she had been saying in reply to all inquiries as to either her house or her child during the last six months. But now Blanche was coming back to her, a change was about to be made; and Mrs. Lyon was glancing forward hopefully to a time when lodgings, and difficulties about dinners—an overwhelming sense of utter inability to keep 'litter' in the background—and 'herself' should be on less familiar terms.

Miss Lyon was expected home to dinner. She was to arrive in town

a few days after Miss Talbot, and to be told on her arrival of the plans that had been formed for Miss Talbot's welfare. Mrs. Lyon was to be the communicant; and Mrs. Lyon, at the moment of her introduction into these pages, was looking forward tremblingly to her task.

She was a middle-aged, neutral-tinted woman, who had always found herself less well placed in the world than she had confidently expected to be, and who yet, withal, had never expected much. She had gone through life obeying mild impulses that invariably tended to convey her further from fortune, and all the delights appertaining thereunto, than she had been before. Yet all her reverses, all her never-ending declinings upon some position still lower than the one she had before occupied, had been powerless to wrinkle her brow, or deepen the lines round the softly-moulded lips that had never been known to utter a severe or a sensible sentence.

The nearest approach to a frown that her brows had ever known was

upon them now, as she sat between the table and the fireplace, awaiting her daughter's advent. She was sorely perplexed and annoyed about two or three things. The chief one was a message that had been brought up wordily from the kitchen to the effect that, if Mrs. Lyon did not have her chicken up now that it was ready, it would be burnt to a cinder.

'It may be brought up the instant Miss Lyon arrives—not before,' she had answered, almost deprecatingly; and then she had gone on to explain to the servant, whose usual manner was one of insolence, tastefully enlivened by familiarity, that, 'Now Miss Lyon was coming, things must be different: they really must, for Miss Lyon was most particular.'

Presently Miss Lyon came. She was heard giving directions about her luggage in the hall; then she came running upstairs, and her mother advanced halfway to the door to meet her, and then fell back to alter the situation of a salt-cellar, and then faltered forward again, and finally involved herself with the door handle just as Blanche was coming into the room: involved herself in such a way, that some lace on her sleeve caught in the key, and brought it to the floor with a clatter that bewildered her, and prevented her seeing Blanche's outstretched hand, and face bent down to kiss her.

While Mrs. Lyon was extricating herself, and explaining how it came to pass that the key should have fallen at this juncture, and calling to 'hasten dinner' in a tone that was unintentionally petulant by reason of her anxiety to make her daughter comfortable at once, Blanche swept on into the full light of the lamp, and stood by the fire, looking back half impatiently, half laughingly, upon the confusion her entrance had caused.

The light of the lamp had never fallen on a brighter beauty than this one. She had a face that was flashing, thoughtful, cloudy, smiling, in such rapid succession that it appeared to be at once. No expression had a long life in her eyes, no smile, and no reason for it, more than a temporary abode on her lip

and in her heart. There was about her that magic of luminous darkness which characterized Edgar Allen Poe's genius. The sheen on each wave of her lustrous ruddy-tipped dark hair; the quickly dilating pupil of her great black-lashed grey eyes; the line that came from nervous agitation or anxious thought across her rather low, square, clever brow; the quick, clear tones that never lost their cultivation; the lithe movement that was never lounging; the rapid gesture that was always refined—all spoke of suppressed fire—all made one marvel at her being the daughter of her mother.

Rounded, but fine-drawn in figure, lacking in those large proportions which made Beatrix Talbot such a glorious type of woman, but with a grace that was all her own, and that was inferior to none; a grace that clothed each action, making it seem the fitting thing to do; a grace that came from perfect proportion, and from an artistic appreciation of all the power perfect proportion gives. A woman—in a word—possessed of that most 'gorgeous cloak for all deficiencies'—an inimitable manner.

How splendidly she stood the test of the strong light after the long day's travel! Standing there, her hands in her muff still; her hat on her head; one well-bred, high-in-stepped little foot lifted up to the top bar, to the detriment of the shapely boot that covered it; her long drapery falling away in graceful folds; and her little delicately pointed nose and chin held aloft in laughing contempt for the chaos she had created—Blanche Lyon looked well worth any man's love, and any woman's envy.

It had been her portion to have much of both. Men had wooed her warmly, and still something had always come between the wooing and the actual satisfactory winning towards which all wooing should tend. She had been very often loved, and very often left. Whether the fault was the lover's, or hers, or Fate's, it was hard to tell. The fault was, and was a bitter one—bitter to her mother, and to such of her relations as felt the bright beauty

to be a responsibility so long as she remained unmarried, but not bitter to Blanche herself. There had always been something wanting on the part of herself or the other to make the union fit. Unless that something could have been supplied, the chasm the want of it made was accepted by Blanche as an inevitable, and not very much to be regretted, thing. She often told herself that a thorough heart-searing would be welcome, as a distraction to the many minor ills by which she had been surrounded ever since she had grown up into the capability of seeing the folly of things, and feeling strongly about them.

It seemed many a long year ago since this capability first became hers, for Blanche Lyon's perceptive faculties developed early, and she was three-and-twenty when her interest in the set of events which go to the making of this story commenced. The rough side of life had been the one on which her baby eyes opened, and it had never been smoothed for her up to the present date. Once upon a time her father had been a gentleman of considerable property in the West of England, but that time had been long past when Blanche came into the world most inopportunistly, adding to expenses that Mr. Lyon found already far exceeded his receipts, and making the delicate, vacillating, neutral-tinted woman he had married more delicate, vacillating, and generally unendurable than she had been before.

It was a sorry home for anything so bright as she was, that in which little Blanche Lyon grew up. Her father took to the evil courses to which men of strong passions, wavering minds, small means, and few interests, are apt to take. He drank and gambled, and was miscellaneously gay in a way that soon degraded him out of the ranks of the order to which he belonged by right of birth. Then his wife reproached him, and lamented, and so goaded him along the lower road faster than he would otherwise have travelled, and the atmosphere of their home was one of black, bitter discontent and gloom, that was never

brightened by one ray of approving conscience.

Yet in this ungenial atmosphere, in this sad grace-abandoned home, the girl grew and thrived, mentally and physically. Gradually she came to take a sort of command of the household, to regulate and refine it a little, and to force the semblance of peace, at least, to hang around it. Long years of gross neglect on the one side, and of feeble reproaches and furious jealousies on the other, had weakened the always slender tie that existed between the husband and wife to the point of dissolution. The marriage had not been one of love, nor had respect, or convenience, or sympathy brought it about. They had married because Mr. Lyon, then a young debonaire man, had taken too much champagne at a hunt ball one night, and under the influence of the same, had seen some charm which did not exist in the daughter of one of the professional men of the town where the festivities were going on. Rather for the sake of avoiding the necessity for making an unsteady progress across the room in search of another partner, than from any feeling of preference for Miss Pulleyne, Arthur Lyon danced with her many times in succession, and kept by her side in the intervals. What he said, or why he said it, he never had the remotest idea; but that he did say something, and that Miss Pulleyne was satisfied with his reasons for the speech, may be gathered from the fact of Mr. Pulleyne calling on him in the morning before the nausea consequent on the previous night's dissipation had passed off, and mildly, but firmly, making it manifest to him that he must consider himself engaged to marry Miss Pulleyne, or be considered a defaulter from the code of honour by all Miss Pulleyne's friends and relations.

The alternative was not a very painful one to the young man, who had a strong element of defiance in his nature. He would have braved the outraged feelings of the whole Pulleyne family, root and branch, without hesitation, had he had any stronger motive for doing so than mere indifference to the daughter of

the house. But indifference was not a sufficiently active feeling to make him do anything definite that might be adverse to the interests of the one towards whom he felt it. It seemed to him that there would be less cause for exertion, less call for explanation, if he married the girl than if he refused to do so. No other woman had any place in his heart, so Arthur Lyon allowed himself to drift into matrimony without even the semblance of love for his wife, or the semblance of curiosity as to whether she loved him or not.

For a few years the house was kept up in a free, open, roughly-hospitable, uncomfortable way—a way that involved the expenditure of a great deal of money, and that kept the whole establishment in a chronic state of confusion. Mrs. Lyon went wafting along with the tide of folly, often enjoying it, often bemoaning it, oftener still weakly suffering herself to be submerged by it; but never once attempting to turn it. When things were at their worst she would weep at her husband, and though her tears were but a drop in the ocean that eventually engulfed him, there was some truth in the man's declaration that he might have breasted it but for those readily flowing reproaches.

Meantime, while things were tending towards the worst—which was the selling of his property and the reduction of the family to live on the liberality of an old uncle of Arthur Lyon's—a little girl had been born—the Blanche of these pages. She grew into a comprehension of the state of things surrounding her very rapidly; it seemed to Arthur Lyon that it was but the 'other day' he had tossed her in long clothes when she advanced her own opinion on a measure he proposed taking, and stood out against his.

This measure was nothing less than the total separation of the girl from her family. The old uncle had fallen sick—sick of life that had lasted till none loved him—sick of being served by those who gave such services as they were paid for, but never a tender tone or look. He was a selfish old man—it ran in the

Lyon blood to be selfish—and he was true to his race in that respect to the last. He had liked women about him all his life. He liked them for their pretty ways and their self-sacrificial power. But now he was old, and women stood afar from him, so he wailed out a plaint to the nephew he supported to the effect that he was deserted and left to die alone, and his nephew, who shrank himself from the society of the old sensualist, said that 'Blanche should come and cheer him up if she would.'

It was merely sagacious on the father's part to add this clause, for Blanche had a will of her own.

'If he were ill I'd go and tend him,' she said, with her bright face in a flame when the plan was proposed to her; 'but he's not ill, papa; he eats and drinks more than is good for him, and I never can love him, or put up with him.'

'You may lose a fortune through not doing so,' her father answered, moodily; 'you're not the only one of the family, remember, Blanche.'

She thought he was referring to her mother and himself, and she was melted in a moment.

'Oh, papa! and I would do anything to serve you; but let it be with you; don't send me away to grow a sneak.'

'I meant, remember, that he can easily find some other relative who will be more acquiescent,' her father replied; 'as to serving me, and not leaving me, I wish to heaven you'd do either, or both, poor child! I shall do you no good; but if you won't go, and my uncle takes a fancy to Bathurst's boy, it's all up with your fate ever being brighter, that's all, my girl.'

She was only a girl of sixteen when this conversation took place, but a woman's winning ways were familiar to her even then. She hung over his shoulder, resting her chin upon it, and looked up into his face.

'Who knows, papa? Bathurst's boy may take a fancy to me!'

'He might do something more extraordinary, certainly. So you decide, then? You will stay with me, and rough it.'

She nodded her head.

'Yes, don't mind my roughing it

ever, papa. I have a little of the gipsy in me, I believe; there's a cross of a vagabond in me somehow, I am sure; it must be on your side, for mamma has nothing of the vagabond in her.'

'Your mother is a slave to mythical respectability,' he answered, testily, and Blanche could not help thinking that her mother had been spared the sight of her thrall for some years.

'Yet she would have had me go to old Mr. Lyon's,' she answered, quickly. 'Well, never mind; you have let me have a choice—I will rough it with you.'

So the question was settled, and once definitely arranged between them, it must be stated in justice to Mr. Lyon, that he never reopened it. But Mrs. Lyon suffered from an utter inability to keep the peace on the subject. Whenever life went ever so little harder than usual with them, Mrs. Lyon sought, after the manner of her kind, to obviate the present difficulty by lamenting the past possibility.

'When I think how different things would have been if only Uncle Lyon's offer had been accepted, I have no patience; if my advice had been asked instead of Blanche's—'

'It wouldn't have been taken by Blanche, that is certain,' her husband would reply. So another element of discord was introduced; the mother grew to dread the child, the child to despise the mother.

It was not a 'bad blow,' or a 'terrible shock,' or any other form of woe that would admit of conventional expression to Blanche Lyon when her father died. His life had shocked her a great deal more than his death; he had fallen away upon evil ways, and his daughter knew it, and was grieved alike in her purity and pride. But when he died she was conscious of rising up under it, glad almost of the opportunity of putting her shoulder to the wheel of the family coach without seeming to usurp his place, and degrade him to the background.

Naturally the woman who had wept at Arthur Lyon almost incessantly while he lived, wept even

more copiously for him when he died. She was an exemplary widow. She felt it 'due to poor Mr. Lyon,' she said, 'to have the best crape and the widest hem-stitched pocket-handkerchiefs.' When she had got them she could not pay for them, and then she felt it due to the mournfulness of the position to sit down and weep over the inability, and nearly madden Blanche by appearing abject before the draper.

For a time it was one of those social mysteries that may never be solved how the widow and her daughter lived. Old Mr. Lyon had died before his nephew, and had not left them even so much as a mourning ring. All his property, personal and landed, was left to a young man already possessing a fine estate of his own, the son of a first cousin, Frank Bathurst.

The fortunate heir had made one or two efforts to institute friendly relations with the widow and daughter of the man who had been more nearly related to old Mr. Lyon than he (Frank) himself. He had heard little of them; they were but names to him, for old Mr. Lyon rarely spoke or thought of people who were not actually engaged in concurring to his own comfort. Still though he had heard so little of them, he knew that they were to be regarded as wronged, or rather that they might be forgiven for so regarding themselves. Accordingly he held out a flourishing olive branch, and Blanche gracefully waived it aside.

'What can the friendship of a young man like Mr. Bathurst do for us?' she asked, when her mother remonstrated with her on the ground that she was throwing away another chance; 'he's very kind to say he will call; he means well, but he needn't do it; callers waste so much of our time.'

'Don't utter such sentiments, Blanche; they are not natural to your age and station in life.'

Blanche laughed.

'I forget what my years are, but I have learnt a good deal in them one way and another; as for my "station in life," well, mother, I don't agree with you about my sen-

timents not being "natural;" they are perfectly natural; they accord with the outward and visible sign of position I am at present hanging out. One little parlour, with a strong odour of roast mutton pervading it, is not the place I should care to receive people in; though I make the best of it, and put it nicely for my pride by declaring that callers waste one's time, and hoping Mr. Frank Bathurst will stay away.'

'You're like your poor dear father, and you always stand in your own light,' Mrs. Lyon replied.

Then the subject was dropped, as far as words went; but Mrs. Lyon recurred to it often in what stood her in place of a mind, and made Blanche aware that she was doing so by dropping tears down at unexpected times into unseemly places.

If Blanche stood in her own light out of innate perversity, it must be conceded to her that the ground she selected to stand upon was far from pleasant, and so she may be accredited with a certain integrity of purpose. She was the one sound plank in what was left of the wrecked Lyon family, and so she willingly took it upon herself to bear the brunt of every storm that might arise.

'We have nothing to live upon, and so we must die, like paupers,' Mrs. Lyon had remarked, while folding away her crape upper skirt on the day of her husband's funeral. 'We must live, and so I must work,' Blanche had replied. 'You know you wouldn't like starving, mamma; and we are neither of us likely to die just yet.' Which speech made Mrs. Lyon feel very unhappy and very discontented, for at the moment she was theoretically ready to undergo any martyrdom in order to prove to survivors that her dead husband had shamefully neglected his duty in not amply providing for her out of nothing.

Blanche's will to work had been very good, but she had a tough struggle with obstacles of many kinds before her will could carry her into any remunerative path. She went the weary round of agency offices, telling the same outspoken story at each—I want to make

enough money to support my mother and myself, and I want to make it respectably. I don't expect comfort or consideration. Shall I do?"

The majority of ladies to whom she addressed herself declared with emphasis that she would not do for a governess in their houses. They either had marriageable sons, or daughters who were engaged, and in either case Miss Lyon's brilliant bloom and beautiful eyes went very much against her. But at last a mother, with no such responsibility, was found, a lady who had no sons at all, and whose eldest daughter was only ten, and who lived away so deeply in the heart of a midland county, in an old secluded country grange, that Blanche's beauty, like the famous flower, seemed born to blush unseen.

This lady, Mrs. Marsh, was the widow of a man who had chanced to have business relations during his life with Mark Sutton. So it came to pass that, the year before this story opened, Mr. and Mrs. Sutton, and some friends of theirs, had gone to pass a few fresh invigorating days down at Mrs. Marsh's place. Mr. Talbot was with them, and when he went back to town, he left his heart with the beautiful governess whom his charming sister, Mrs. Sutton, had sedulously flouted the whole time they were together.

Indeed, the pretty guest had been most sorely tried by the resident beauty. Marian had gone to the Grange gracefully enough to all outward seeming, but she had had a sharp struggle with her sense of expediency before she did so. Her husband asked it as a favour to himself that she should accept the invitation of the widow of his old friend, and Marian, who knew that it was well her list of favours shown to him should be a long one, made a fair show of surface sweetness, and went, determining to make the best of it. She was well aware that the Grange was not the type of country house where the time would fly. She had a presentiment that it would be respectable and intensely dull, and that she should get to hate the excellent Mrs. Marsh before she had long tasted that lady's hospitality.

But as it was advisable she should go, she went with a fair show of grace, reflecting that she could perhaps ravish the hearts, and tastes, and eyes of some of the better sort of the male members of the benighted neighbourhood that had never seen a Marian Sutton before. On the strength of this hope she had some very perfectly designed costumes made to take with her, and bowed the neck in getting them from Hortense. It was hard to find Miss Lyon in possession after such a praiseworthy display of self-abnegation, and such tasteful efforts to make herself look as well as she could. Hard, very hard, to feel that her prettiness paled before Blanche's radiancy, and that the governess did not spoil her beauty by evidencing an overwhelming sense of inferiority to Mrs. Sutton, as Mrs. Sutton deemed it only becoming governesses should do.

'Miss Lyon is more than pretty, she is almost lady-like,' Marian said to her brother Edgar one morning, when together they were sauntering in the gardens of the Grange. 'Do you admire her?' Marian gave him one quick glance through her half-closed eyelids as she asked the question, and saw that he coloured as he answered it.

'Admire is a weak word for her. I think her splendid.'

'So does Mark,' Marian said, laughing. She knew that her brother rated Mark Sutton's intellect very low indeed, and denied him all claim to the possession of taste. It was pleasant, therefore, to her to put Edgar in the position of having his admiration for Miss Lyon endorsed by Mark Sutton. 'So does Mark. She is just the sort of dashing, rather loud young country lady whom Mark would admire.'

'Thank you for the implication, Marian.'

'Why! what have I said that is not quite true?' she inquired, opening her eyes a little wider as she spoke. 'Don't thank me for implying things, Edgar. I never imply; I speak out. It's my misfortune to be too truthful.'

'You have never suffered from the effects of that misfortune as yet,

luckily. Never mind, Marian; what more have you to say against Miss Lyon?'

'Against her?' Mrs. Sutton reiterated, gathering her skirts away from contact with the ground, and putting her hand through her brother's arm: 'not a word against her; she amuses me too much.'

'How?'

'Oh, with her would-be lady-like airs of quiet reserve when she is as full of animal spirits as she can be. She is like all underbred people—odious when quiet on compulsion.'

Mrs. Sutton spoke with considerable animation, in a ringing treble. Her hand, too, trembled on her brother's arm.

'You speak with a good deal of feeling. What has Miss Lyon done to you, Marian?'

'Done to me!' She laughed and recovered herself. 'Perhaps you believe that I am capable of being jealous of Mark's clumsily-expressed admiration for her?'

'If he were not your husband I should think so decidedly.'

'But as he is my husband? My dear Edgar, pray banish that notion from your mind. He admires our cook very much—she is Miss Lyon's most formidable rival; he wavers to such a degree between the two, that I feel my balance of power is not endangered.'

'The sarcasm is neither very delicate nor very keen. It is modest on your part, though, Marian, to undervalue Mark's taste in this way. He chose you.'

'Which speech is full of the attributes which were wanting in my sarcasm,' she replied. 'Come, Edgar, let there be an armed neutrality between us about Miss Lyon. I cannot endure incivility; and you are almost capable of being uncivil to me when I venture to hint that she is not as absolutely perfect as Mark thinks her.'

It will easily be understood that after this Mrs. Sutton had less toleration in her soul, though far more in her speech, for Blanche Lyon. The girl held her own so quietly amongst them all, even when her mother came to join the party at Mrs. Marsh's considerate invitation. Mrs. Lyon

fell an easy and unsuspecting victim into every pit Mrs. Sutton prepared for her, and Mrs. Sutton prepared many. It was altogether beyond the power of the pretty, young, wealthy, admired married woman, to put the governess in the second place. Mrs. Sutton had quite exhausted her store of depreciatory devices on Miss Lyon, and still Miss Lyon was as composedly indifferent to her, and as unfettered in her intercourse with Mr. Sutton and Mr. Talbot as if Marian had not existed. Mrs. Sutton had taken a patronizing tone, and Blanche had, with great good temper, and good breeding, too, made manifest the fact that Mrs. Sutton's patronage was too small a thing to be either accepted or rejected. Then Marian had ignored Blanche's presence and remarks, and neither Blanche's presence nor remarks grew less bright for the treatment. If Miss Lyon had employed a country dress-maker, and her waist could have been proved to be an inch too high or too low, too slight or too large, Marian would have been less bitter. But Miss Lyon daringly employed the great Hortense, and did not give Mrs. Sutton the shadow of a chance of finding fault. Marian had almost given up the contest, when Mrs. Lyon came, and strengthened Mrs. Sutton's forces unintentionally at once.

The poor lady had sighed for this invitation, and in her own transparent way had schemed for it. She had declared her intention of taking lodgings in the neighbourhood of the Grange for a few weeks in order to be near her child. And her child had kept the declaration a dead secret from Mrs. Marsh while she could, and had sedulously striven to alter the intention. But, like all people who are unstable by nature, Mrs. Lyon cultivated obstinacy under the name of strength of will, whenever the display of it seemed to promise her one of those 'changes for the better' which her half hopeful, half discontented mind had always craved. This seemed to her a fitting opportunity for flaunting out her limp flag of defiance. Accordingly she did it in a tremulous

manner that was essentially her own, and essentially repugnant to Blanche. She wrote to Mrs. Marsh, proposing that Blanche should come and pass a few weeks with her at a farmhouse about two miles from the Grange, and during those weeks walk backwards and forwards for the fulfilling of her educational duties towards the little Marshes. To the proposition of this plan she appended a humble hope that Blanche would not catch a violent cold on her chest in the course of these compulsory walks, and so develop an hereditary delicacy which had always been a source of anguish to her anxious mother. The reply to this letter (the contents of which Mrs. Marsh kept from Blanche, but which were told to her in a song of triumph sung by Mrs. Lyon as soon as she arrived) was the invitation which brought her in contact with Mrs. Sutton, and more important still, with Edgar Talbot.

For a day or two Blanche was taken in by the manner Mrs. Sutton adopted towards Mrs. Lyon, but after a day or two she saw through and resented it as such a woman would resent a manner that was the offspring of such a motive. It has been said that Mrs. Lyon went with celerity into all the pitfalls Mrs. Sutton prepared for her. She did more; she went into them as if they were pleasant places. Under the influence of the false, subtle, fascinating allurements of the soft-voiced woman with the tender half-closed eyes, poor Mrs. Lyon would enter upon the telling of endless narratives that were uninteresting in themselves, that concerned people of whom her auditors had never heard, and that were singularly void of point. And Mrs. Sutton would listen to them with an assumption of interest that Blanche felt to be insolent, and would recall the wandering attention of her brother Edgar, [and generally portray pitying condescension towards a tedious inferior in a way that at last made Blanche Lyon writhe.

Writhe to a degree that at length the smaller elements in her mental organization trampled over the better, and urged her to enter upon



Drawn by W. Small.]

PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES.

[See the Story.

an ignoble contest. Then she brought the battery of her great beauty, the wonderful wealth of her animal spirits, the subtle charm of her soul superiority to himself to bear upon the husband of the woman who sought to render her ridiculous through her mother. She took the conversation, as women of her mental calibre know how to take it, on to ground where Mark Sutton was very much at a loss, and compelled him to join in it, and contrived that he should do so to his disadvantage. In short, she sought to shame his wife through him; sought to do so till she saw him smart under the consciousness of one of his blunders, and then bitterly repented herself of the littleness.

There was nothing attractive, nothing interesting, little worth thinking about, in short, in Mark Sutton. Still Blanche's heart went out warmly to him when he told her that he 'had always thought too little of himself for it to have been quite worthy of her to have made him think less.' The rebuke was a bitterly sharp one to her in its moderation and humility. If the man she had made absurd in the eyes of others, above all of his wife, if he had turned round upon her as a man of his class would be likely to turn, she thought she could have borne it better, and forgiven herself more readily. But he was kinder to her than before, kind as to one who had need of protection against herself amongst others.

Blanche Lyon had a bright, clear, discriminating power, and she recognized this element, and acknowledged that there was ground for its being shown. She had just a few words of explanation with him, and bound him to her by them a faster friend than before. Going to him one afternoon as he was walking along between two high laurel hedges, with a little flush of mingled penitence and pride on her rounded healthy cheeks, with a shimmer over her grey eyes, and a touch of tremulousness in her voice that appealed to him very sweetly, what could any man do but forgive her when she said—

'I have been made to smart so

that like the scorpion I was ready to sting myself, Mr. Sutton; I did worse, I tried to sting the only human being who cared enough for me to be stung by my ingratitude. Can you forgive me?'

She looked what Edgar Talbot had called her, a 'splendid creature,' as she asked this. Standing there before him in her rich, heavily-falling, violet-hued, winter drapery, with her bright face toned down into a transient tenderness by remorse, with all the winning delicacies of her most winning manner brought into such quiet play, with the silent weight of the pretty, refined, feminine trifles of becoming hat and well-fitting gloves, and mere idea of perfume brought to bear upon him—to bear upon the man who had never known them in his youth, and who accepted them all as badges of the station to which he had climbed. What could he do but forgive her, and utter the hope that he might be permitted, might be able to befriend her?

'And if you ever can, I will ask you,' she said.

'And I will do it while I live,' he answered.

'Even against your wife?' she interrupted, with a laugh, and Mark Sutton's heart sank and his colour rose at even so slight an allegation being brought against Marian; but still he replied heartily, taking the hand of the girl who had made it,

'Even against Marian, if—'

'Let there be no "ifs" in the case.'

Mrs. Sutton herself interrupted, lounging forward from a half-concealed seat in the laurel hedge.

'Excuse me; I would have spoken before if I had recognized your voices,' she added, carelessly; 'but I thought it was some of the servants indulging in a lovers' quarrel; it was not till my name was taken in vain that—'

'You remembered ladies do not listen,' Blanche put in, hastily. Then the belligerents looked straight into each other's eyes, and it occurred to Mark Sutton that it might be very hard for him to keep his promise of befriending Blanche, 'even against his wife.'

CHAPTER V.

CUMBERED WITH MUCH SERVING.

Meanwhile an alliance that would have seemed very strange and full of discordant elements to Blanche, had she noticed it, had been formed between Mrs. Lyon and Edgar Talbot. Almost before the girl, with all her sensitiveness, was conscious of it, he marked his sister's manner towards Mrs. Lyon, and saved her from it as far as he could. He perceived at once that in her garrulousness lay Mrs. Lyon's chief danger, and Mrs. Sutton's chief chance of stinging Blanche into subjection. Therefore he turned that garrulousness upon himself as far as he could, devoting himself to the mother in a way that would have touched the daughter very much had she loved him, but that, as it was, simply made her regard him as a well-meaning young man who could have nothing in common with her, since he 'rather seemed to prefer mamma's tedious talk.'

It must at once be conceded that Blanche Lyon was very far from being a type of the duteous child of real life or romance, who can cloud her own judgment over to the extent of believing, whatever the parental attributes, that they are perfect. She never allowed herself to say or look aught that might be construed into a slight upon the woman with the lukewarm nature and limp mind whose child it was her misfortune to be. But though she kept the peace, and was filial outwardly, she was inwardly conscious of all the weak places, and she used no shallow euphemisms in describing them to herself. When Mrs. Lyon got into a wordy labyrinth, and then immediately proceeded to display an impatient hopelessness about ever extricating herself, Edgar Talbot would put in a word, and help her to clear herself in a way that caused Blanche to leave her mother very trustfully to his mercy, but at the same time to think him not exactly a 'poor spirited creature,' perhaps; but at any rate little more than a 'good sort of young man who suited mamma.' Her own lack of interest

in, and appreciation for him, blinded her to his motives, his admiration for herself, his tenderness for her feelings, his anxiety to put all belonging to her in the best light—all these were lost upon her by reason of her heart being untouched by him.

So it came about that when Mrs. Lyon left the Grange, and went back to live in London, her communications respecting Mr. Talbot's unabated interest in, and kindness to her, fell flatly upon Blanche.

'It's very good of him to go and call on mamma—I suppose her old stories amuse him,' was her sole mental comment upon the fact of Edgar Talbot having 'renewed the acquaintance, and said he was sure he hoped it would continue,' to use Mrs. Lyon's own words. Miss Lyon thought so little about it, in fact, that she never so much as referred to it in any one of the letters which Mrs. Lyon, in her frequent bursts of maternal pride, would give him to read. Accordingly, when he first mooted the plan of the united household for the sake of his sister Beatrix, he treated it as he did any other venture, and declared that it would be injudicious to talk about it prematurely. 'Wait until Miss Lyon comes home, and then tell her what you have kindly consented to do—her companionship will be invaluable to my sister,' he had said. And Mrs. Lyon had refrained, sorely against her will, from writing wordy letters, and had kept a silence on the subject which was to be broken for the first time on this night of Blanche's arrival.

Mrs. Marsh was going to break up her establishment, put her daughter to school, and go on the Continent herself, therefore she required Miss Lyon's services no longer. Blanche had come home charged with good resolutions. Amongst others, she was not going to suffer impatience to obtain for one minute in her heart against the weak one who should have been her support, and who in all things had to lean upon her. Additionally, she was going to spend the three or four months' holidays she meant to take in learning some language or accom-

plishment which should fit her to take some better situation than she had hitherto held. The consciousness of being fraught with good intentions came to her aid happily, and tided her over the irritating half-hour of confusion, complaining, and explanation which succeeded her advent. Mrs. Lyon was a woman who was utterly incapable of letting a fact speak for itself. The dinner was late—the dinner is very apt to be late where unceasing fuss and one female servant reign alone. Blanche could have borne this with composure, as she had not set her hopes on dining the moment she arrived. What she found hard to bear was being told it was late, and why it was late—a stream of narration which was swollen continually by many wayside springs of explanation concerning all the nouns incidentally mentioned. It was hard, very hard, indeed, for the girl who had a good heavy weight upon her, made up of many things, to listen patiently to the tale of the green-grocer's laxity, the butcher-boy's peccadilloes, and the servant's general iniquities.

'I do not mind for myself,' Mrs. Lyon wound up with, when the wearied Blanche drew a quick breath that was as much of a sigh as a sensible woman can ever permit herself to heave, and this not out of impatience at any of the ills to which the livers on narrow incomes are heir, but at the manner of their recital, 'I do not mind for myself; I never expect to be anything but worried and uncomfortable; but I do wish to make your home pleasant to you.'

'Then, mother, let me do all the fault-finding,' Blanche answered, brightly. 'You sit down and take things easy.'

'Ah!' Mrs. Lyon said, shaking her head, and rising up laboriously to move two or three things that might with perfect propriety have remained where they were, 'it's easy to talk: your poor dear father always spoke as if regulating a household, and having things nice and comfortable, was no more trouble than taking a walk.'

'But you don't have things nice

and comfortable, with all the fuss you make.' Blanche only thought this sentence, she did not say it. All she said was, 'I daresay you are right, mamma; but comfort is a most uncomfortable thing.' Then she took off her hat and threw it back on to the sideboard (when Mrs. Lyon followed it as if it might have done some damage to the normal decorations of that piece of furniture, if it were not carefully supervised), and then she threw off a good deal of the brightness with which she had come into the room, and sat down rather sadly, under the conviction that her good resolutions would be utterly routed before long.

Down at the Grange there had been an easy-going refinement pervading all the arrangements—a refinement that came as much from the mistress having a clear head, as it did from her having a full purse; but here, up in this little cramped lodging, where the head and purse of the presiding domestic deity were alike badly supplied, there was a good deal that was temper-trying and unavoidable, and (which was worse) there was a good deal that was temper-trying and avoidable. Probably the race of Marthas—the women who are cumbered with much serving—will survive and flourish unto the last. It may be for our good that they should do so. In some cases the end does justify the means; as, for instance, when vaccination causes small-pox to be lightly taken, or when missionary pie brings one savage of delicate digestion to a sense of the superiority of living preaching missionaries over the preparation which has disagreed with him. But, in the majority of every-day matters, the end is too small for fussy means to be forgiven.

'I am sure, the day I have had!—not a moment to call my own since I got out of bed, Blanche!' Mrs. Lyon commenced, piteously, when the chicken made its appearance at last, and the two ladies sat down to dinner.

'How happy you must have been,' Blanche answered, with most injudicious truthfulness. It was a fact

that Mrs. Lyon never was so easy in her mind as when she was actively employed in contributing to confusion; but it was a fact the mention of which she always resented.

'Happy!' she echoed, pausing in her employment about the toughest part of the wing. 'Happy! it is very little happiness I have known in life, Blanche—very little, as I have told your poor dear father over and over again.'

'What a comfort it must have been to my father to hear you say so.' Blanche had remembered her good resolutions by this time; so, though she could not resist making the speech, she made it in her lightest, pleasantest manner.

'I am afraid he cared very little about it,' Mrs. Lyon replied, pathetically. Then she shed a tear or two, and had to stop to chase them down her cheeks and dry them before they escaped. Meanwhile the chicken grew cold, and Blanche had time to wonder whether it had been quite worth while to spend the whole day in designing and striving after a consummation that was suffered to spoil when achieved.

'Tell me some of the things you have been busy about, mamma,' Blanche asked, hastily. And then Mrs. Lyon entered upon a narrative that reminded her daughter of the famous brook, in that it bid fair to go on 'for ever.' A narrative that wound round and round the original subject which it had professed to treat of at starting, cleverly avoiding that, and embracing instead a variety of topics that had no connection whatever with anything about which Blanche ever had heard, or ever could desire to hear.

The truth was that Mrs. Lyon was striving to brace herself for the leap she had promised Edgar Talbot to rise at, by taking a conversational preliminary canter. She rather dreaded the look the announcement might call into life in her daughter's great, grey, honest eyes. More, she rather dreaded a definite refusal on Blanche's part to accompany her to Mr. Talbot's house, there to play the part of social guardian-angel to Mr. Talbot's sister.

Mrs. Lyon broke the tidings, in what she conceived to be a singularly diplomatic way. She waited till Blanche (tired out with her journey and several hours' hard hunting after her mother's meaning, which had been, as usual, sedulously concealed in many words) went up to her own room and prepared to go to bed.

To bed, but not to sleep; for Mrs. Lyon followed her with a glass of warm sherry and water, a beverage with which Blanche was unsympathetic, the mere sight and faint odour of which brought back memories of childish illnesses and general debility. Mrs. Lyon followed her with this draught and the words—

'My dear Blanche, what do you think of this plan of Mr. Talbot's?' laying a slight stress on the words 'what do you think,' as if the matter had been before Blanche for some time, and had been a subject of free discussion between Mrs. Lyon and others.

'Mr. Talbot! — Mrs. Sutton's brother? I don't think I know any plan of his,' Blanche replied, raising herself up and leaning on her elbow.

'Then I may as well tell you to-night, to give you something pleasant to dream about,' the elder lady rejoined, with a little affected air of jocularity that was very pitiable. Then she went on to tell what Mr. Talbot had thought, and she had thought first; and then what each of them had said to the other, and then what each had thought the other would think, and then what both had said Blanche would think, until she swam away into a haven of satisfaction out of the dangerous difficulties of the ocean of words she herself had created. 'There, now go to sleep and dream about it, and ask no questions until the morning,' she interrupted, rather querulously, when Blanche began, 'But, mamma.' The interruption fell on deaf ears, however; Blanche would not go to sleep and dream about it just yet.

'To manage Mr. Talbot's house and his sister! What is his sister? an infant or an idiot?'

'Really, Blanche, no one, to hear

you, would believe how careful I always have been in my own language. Choice! I was considered quite choice in my expressions when I was a girl; and I am sure for years after my marriage your father never heard me say a word that the whole world might not have heard.'

'I dare say not, poor papa!' the girl cried, with petulant irreverence. 'Never mind my bad language to-night, though, mother,—tell me more of this plan; tell me something I can hear with patience;—tell me, you have not agreed to put yourself and me in the position of servants in Mr. Talbot's house.'

She spoke fast and earnestly. Her mother, in describing the tones Blanche used on the occasion, afterwards, to the sympathising Mrs. Sutton, denominated them 'fierce.'

'I am to be Miss Talbot's chaperon.'

Blanche laughed out merrily. The absurdity would touch herself she knew; still she could not help seeing the humour of it all, and laughing at it for the time.

'And I—what am I to be?' she inquired.

'You are to be Miss Talbot's companion—treated quite like her sister; and really, Blanche, I do not see that a companion is so much lower than a governess,' Mrs. Lyon added, hurriedly. Then she went on to cry a little, and to say that this was a prospect that opened up something like peace, and comfort, and security to her—things (she would mention incidentally) which had hitherto been denied to her. But of course she should have to give them up, and go on living the life of privation, not to say misery, for which she had been expressly born!

Then Blanche had to perform a humiliating task: to argue against her own judgment, for the sake of rescuing her mother from the watery abyss over which the latter insisted on hovering. She reminded herself that she was not sure of being able to do better for Mrs. Lyon than Mrs. Lyon proposed doing for herself, and she sedulously strove to cultivate the feeling that it was unworthy of her to imagine that there would be any degradation

in going in a subordinate position to the house of Mrs. Sutton's brother. The mere thought of her fair, insolent, skilful antagonist brought her worst qualities vigorously to the surface. 'If she does not keep the peace from the first—from the very first—keep it fairly, and never try to deal me a foul blow, I will strike,—and wound her, too,' she thought, as she turned her hot, throbbing brow from the light and pressed it into the pillow, when at last her mother left her alone—but not to sleep.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAMILY PARTY.

Mrs. Sutton had certainly not neglected one of the primary duties of woman on the night of the family dinner party to which she had asked Mr. Bathurst. She was looking her best; there had been no counting the cost in the creation of the rich costume that seemed only a fitting finish to her prettiness—it was so perfect in its unobtrusiveness. Having abstained—as may be remembered—from going to offer Beatrix a hint on the subject of her dress, she was rather disappointed to find, on Beatrix's entrance, that the hint would have been superfluous, Miss Talbot having dressed the situation capitally. Securely as Mrs. Sutton stood in the centre of her own rich draperies, she did feel her heart hardening against the younger sister, who, coming straight from the wilds of the country, dared not alone to know what to wear, but how to wear it.

As a rule family parties must be admitted to be very trying things. They are pleasant to read about when they are treated, for example, as Dickens treated the Wardles, in 'Pickwick.' Still we cannot help being struck by the great truth that even the Manor Farm might have been dull, even at that hilarious season of the year, if it had not been enlivened by the presence of the Pickwickians—and introduced to us by Charles Dickens.

Mrs. Sutton thoroughly appreciated all the difficulties attendant

on making a family dinner party go off well. The thorough appreciation was not the result of experience, for it was the first time her brothers and sisters had met together under her roof, and Mark was too completely the result of circumstances for any material family connections he might have, to come under Marian's consideration. But though she had had no practice in the art, her theory about it was very perfect.

'The salvation of the affair will be, that two of us know nothing whatever about each other or the rest,' Mrs. Sutton had said to herself while dressing. 'Trixy and Lionel will assemble themselves together here with as much faith in us all and our surroundings as if they were strangers to us.' Mrs. Sutton laughed a pleasantly derisive little laugh, as she thought this, and looked at herself so sweetly in the glass, that her maid thought it an auspicious moment to hint how acceptable her 'wages' would be to her. At the sound of the word the fair, innocent-browed, well-to-do beauty's face clouded, and she turned impatiently from the glass.

'I have told you, over and over again, that I will pay you when I can, Rickson. What is the use of your worrying me about it? You are all alike—a set of spoilt extortionists. Hortense would not have charged any one else three guineas a yard for this lace, that looks nothing now it is on; and as for you, with the things I am always giving you, you are as well-dressed as I am myself.'

Rickson had lived with the syren-voiced lady ever since her marriage, and was attached to her after a fashion. Mrs. Sutton was one of those women who wound, and wrong, and insult with soft hand, and kind eyes, and gentle tones. It was almost impossible to feel angry with her, or to deem her in the wrong if she deigned to desire that any one should feel pleased with her, and consider her in the right. She would falsify facts, trick, deceive, deal in any form of treachery, in short. But she did it all pleasantly; and so, some way or other, though she was found out continually, her de-

pendents stood by her, and served her, and suffered for it. It was her specialty to be sweet and gentle, feminine and pleasant. Given the object Lady Macbeth had to gain, and she would have played Lady Macbeth's part. But she would first have made Macduff love her for her tenderness and delicacy and for her fair innocent beauty, that she might have killed him the more conveniently while his admiration was at its height, with a nice clean dagger.

So now, though she spoke impatiently to Rickson, and would not, like Hope, tell a 'flattering tale' of prompt payment, there fell the magic mantle of her pleasant manner between herself and her servant, who showed her sense of that manner's artistic merit by being far less uncivil than she thought she dared to be.

Nevertheless, though the subject was dropped almost as soon as started, it had brought the fact of there being several serious crumples in her rose-leaf prominently before Mrs. Sutton. She set her little, white, straight teeth together savagely as her sister came into the drawing-room, remembering that Beatrix had it all before her—had a fair start—might marry, and carry on the war as brilliantly as she (Marian) was doing it, without one of Marian's inward pangs.

For pretty Mrs. Sutton had these occasionally. She was not one of the successful sinners of romance, who do all sorts of reprehensible things, with a conscience unclouded as their cheeks. Mrs. Sutton told stories, and deceived her husband, and got herself into debts and difficulties through pursuing a tortuous course, when fair sailing would have carried her clear of all such things. But she did not sin with impunity. She was horribly frightened at times—she was brought so very low, at others, as to have to put on a fair surface-seeming to her inferiors; she went about in daily danger of being found out. And though she fully deserved it all, it being her desert did not make the inward pangs less hard for a woman to bear.

It may be doubted whether she suffered in her conscience. It may, indeed, be doubted whether she had any conscience at all, in the proper acceptance of the word. Her two strongest qualities were thoughtlessness and vanity, and these do not conduce much to the preservation, far less cultivation, of any conscience with which a human being may originally have been endowed. But however it may have been about that, it is undoubtedly a fact that she went through many a quaking time when her pride of place, her power of creating and keeping admiration, her domestic position was endangered. For all her well-bred little airs and graces, she had it in her to be very much of a sycophant—had it in her to trail her nut-brown tresses in the dust in private rather than have them lowered one inch in public, even though there was no moral degradation in such lowering.

She had banished the sharp expression of savage jealousy before Beatrix had time to see that it was more than a welcoming smile—banished it, and substituted one of young matronly dignity, that sat very gracefully upon her almost girlish beauty, Frank Bathurst thought. During the first ten minutes of being with the two sisters, Mr. Bathurst made many profound and original observations to himself on the superiority of perfect tact, grace, and style over mere 'perfect beauty,' as shown in the favourable contrast Mrs. Sutton offered to her younger sister. It did not occur to him at the time that the contrast might not have been so markedly in favour of the married woman had she not happened to be apparently absorbed in something he himself was saying to her. When he mentioned afterwards to Lionel that 'Mrs. Sutton talked well,' Lionel knew enough of his friend and his sister to feel certain that the latter had listened admiringly.

But when they got themselves seated round the dinner-table, the inferiority of perfect beauty was less patent to Mr. Frank Bathurst. He saw that there was a touch of nobility about the girl opposite to him

which her pretty married sister lacked. Beatrix had not a vivacious face, but she had a face that was capable of very intense expression, and this capability made itself manifest to the artist at a very early stage of the dinner, and brought him very much under her banner, though he was ignorant of the cause that called forth that intensity. For want of some more interesting topic which should have a common interest, they had been speaking of some of the extravagances of the day, and Edgar Talbot had quoted some of the dull and dead season letters to the 'Times' about it.

'From a man's point of view, it's simply feeble the way in which you ladies haunt certain shops and milliners' establishments,' Mr. Talbot said to Mrs. Sutton; 'you order your dress, and take a fair amount of time to do it, and then you give a few more days to the buttons, and the band, and the trimming. I won't have you spoil Beatrix, Marian.'

'Marian has commenced well, at any rate,' her husband put in. Then (he was off guard for once) he added, 'She tells me she did not even take her sister near Hortense yesterday.'

Even as he spoke he remembered himself—remembered how he had seen his wife's carriage at the dress-maker's door, and his heart smote him as he looked at Beatrix and saw the same look of intense, hot scorn on her face which Frank was just admiring.

Like a cat, Mrs. Sutton invariably offered a velvet paw, keeping the claws well back, and purred when she dared not scratch. She dared not scratch now; every one of the people present could be, and should be, useful to her. So she said, quite suavely—

'Trixy finds the room too hot; she is quite flushed. Take my advice, Edgar, and have a nice perforated oak screen put up in your room before you begin giving dinners. When do the Lyons come to you?'

The diversion was perfect. Mr. Bathurst ceased in an instant to admire Miss Talbot's expression,

and to ponder over what could have called it into being.

'The Lyons,' he repeated, addressing Mr. Talbot; 'do you know any Lyons?'

'I know a Mrs. Lyon and her daughter,' Edgar replied, rather stiffly. He exceedingly disliked having to offer up explanations concerning his relations with the Lyons to chance questioners.

'We all know Mrs. Lyon and her daughter,' Mrs. Sutton went on to explain, 'and we are all very much at the feet of Mrs. Lyon and her daughter, are we not, Mark?'

'I am more than rather interested. I have some cousins—distant cousins—of the name of Lyon. Is Miss Lyon called Blanche?'

'Yes, the children used to call her Blanche sometimes,' Mrs. Sutton replied.

'Children—what children?'

'The children where she was governess,' Mrs. Sutton said, quietly. And something in her tone brought the blood to the brows of the two men to whom Blanche was nearest, the one through his love for, the other through his relationship to her. Frank Bathurst was the first to speak.

'She went out as a governess, did she? A high-spirited girl, as she ought to be, coming of that stock.'

Then he told the story of old Mr. Lyon's request, and rage at Blanche Lyon refusing it; and when he had finished, Mrs. Sutton felt very sorry that she had spoken about the Lyons at all. She had still one more charge in the gun she always carried against Blanche Lyon, and this she contrived to deliver in the course of the evening. But she sent it home to the 'one' alone—she felt that at dinner she had not been diplomatic.

As soon as the two sisters found themselves alone in the drawing-room, Mrs. Sutton realized that she must talk very fast and very forcibly in order to keep Trixy from uttering the reproachful words she was evidently burning to utter relative to Madame Hortense. She had no distrust of her own powers of managing to avoid hearing unpleasant things. A few minutes spent in saying pretty

things fluently, then a few minutes' sleep, or assumption of it, and then the men would come in, and 'decent sisterly feeling would prevent Trixy' speaking. Mrs. Sutton was great about many things, but perhaps she was greatest of all about the moral and social responsibilities of others.

Accordingly she commenced at once, while wheeling one little couch round nearer to the fire to make 'Trixy comfortable,' and pushing another back into her own pet corner, where were low seats for satellites.

'Very good looking Damon and Pythias are.'

'You mean Lionel and his friend?' Trixy asked.

'Yes, of course I do. What a fortunate thing it is for us all that Lionel did not go into the bondage of an artistic friendship with one of the many untidy and poor young men who paint, and whose name is legion.'

Marian paused, and Trixy was on the point of saying a word as to the possibility of the untidy and poor young man being not utterly devoid of merit. A moment's consideration saved her from the error. Marian had not impugned their merit; she had only said it was a comfort to the family that Lionel had not formed a friendship for one of them. Probably she was right.

'It is an immense satisfaction to me that he is what he is,' Marian went on. 'I am far too fond of my brothers,' she added, piously, 'not to feel it my duty to see a great deal of them; a married sister can be of such immense service to a young man, can she not?'

The climax was weak. Beatrix had been feeling her painful inferiority and utter uselessness as an 'unmarried sister,' but she was partially restored by the appeal.

'I have no doubt that she can, and that you are, Marian,' she replied, laughing. 'Do your good offices extend to their friends?'

'When their friends are like Mr. Bathurst, and I have a beautiful sister, who is still Miss Talbot, near me, yes. The story tells itself, without trouble, Trixy; my experience of men with those heavenly blue

eyes is, that they fall in love with every loveable earthly creature they meet.'

Amongst other girlish attributes, Miss Talbot had a fair sense of her own importance. She did not hold it absolutely necessary that other lips and other hearts should have played no part in the past of the one who might hope to win her in the present. She did not hold this absolutely necessary. At the same time, it would be a first condition with her that she should reign, and reign alone. So now she said—

'My experience of men with heavenly blue eyes is yet to be gained, and will not be from Mr. Bathurst.'

'I have heard those decisions against a man's suit, before it has been proffered, made before to-day, Trixy,' Mrs. Sutton said, in her most dulcet accents, stretching her feet out so that the dainty silk shoes, with their big rosettes, just escaped below her robe. 'Don't determine too resolutely against Frank Bathurst; his eyes will upset your strongest resolutions, if he ever brings them to bear upon you.'

'I will give him up to Miss Lyon, she has the prior claim,' Trixy said, laughing. And then Mrs. Sutton sat up and pushed her brown hair back off her forehead, and suffered her eyes to scintillate.

'You will be weak—weak is no word for it,—you will be foolish and wrong to the last degree, if you suffer that girl to be in Edgar's house for a week, Trixy; she will marry him and lead him like a blind dog!'

'And if she does?'

'If she does!—you ask it coolly enough now; but, take my word for it, you will know the reason why it would be better she should not, before she has been his wife a month. She is artful, designing, unscrupulous, and clever.'

Mrs. Sutton spoke fast and forcibly, but neither loudly nor coarsely. She panted out her denunciation of Miss Lyon much as a silver bell might 'ring out' the falseness of the epoch with its tinkling chimes. In the face of the knowledge she had that Marian

could diverge from the truth to suit her own convenience, without effort or scruple, and despite her brother Edgar's caution on the subject, Beatrice was conscious of being considerably carried by the fascinating homilist on the sofa.

'You know something to her disadvantage, Marian?—you could not be so bitter against this girl for nothing,' Trixy asked, unguardedly. And Mrs. Sutton said to herself, 'I wish I did,' and to her sister—

'I know nothing; but I have my instincts—a pure woman's instincts seldom mislead, Trixy,' she continued, with a brilliantly rapid assumption of the best British matron manner. Then they had to cease from the subject, for Lionel and Mr. Bathurst came in to ask if they might take their coffee there.

The pure woman, whose instincts seldom misled her, thought it well, on the whole, since she desired to stand highly with Frank Bathurst, to devote herself a good deal to her almost stranger brother this evening. There was a good deal about Lionel that was very interesting to most women. He was intelligent, with a bright surface intelligence that does not always—or often—go with the deeper, more intense æsthetic feeling for appreciation of, and proficiency in, art or literature. Further, he was good-looking, fine, well-grown, and graceful. There was no need for him to be ticketed—no woman seen with him would feel called upon to give a hasty explanation respecting him. She would rather take pride in waiting and hearing the speculations to which his appearance gave rise, since all of them were flattering.

If there was a good deal that was interesting to women generally about Mr. Lionel Talbot, the young, already well-reputed artist, there was even more that was particularly interesting to his sister, Mrs. Sutton. She saw in him a good, strong, legitimate stepping-stone to a higher place in the social scale for herself. She was very far from being contented with the position she had gained. Mark was utterly useless for the purpose of Marian's glorification. She would willingly have seen

him thrice as plebeian in appearance, and know him three hundred times as plebeian in mind, to have been able to hang him on; when casually mentioning him, to some one of the great county families. But she could not do so, fertile as was her imagination, and inexhaustible as were her expedients for self-aggrandisement. In most things he pandered to her weakness, for the sake of keeping it from the sight of the world that was only too willing to misjudge.

But in this he was firm—he would not lie himself, or be lied by any one over whom he had sway, into the line of Suttons of high degree. ‘I am not much to boast of, but, such as I am, I’m the best and the first gentleman of my family,’ he would say. And when he would say this, no matter whom it was said before, Marian, beneath all her falseness, all her keen desire to seem higher than she was, all her mortification, and all her indifference—had a feeling of admiration for the pluck of the man who could avow it calmly, and not vaunt himself upon the daring to so avow it. The speech had frequently knocked down some delicate fabric of fiction respecting the family she had married into, which Mrs. Sutton had erected with much elaboration, for the benefit of some stranger. It had made her wince, and smart, and blush over and over again; but it always made her like the man who said it more.

Now, about Lionel her hopes were very high. She saw that he was made of more ductile materials than Edgar; moreover, he knew less about her, and was more likely, therefore, to come under her influence. If only he succeeded brilliantly, she would attach herself to, and identify herself very much with him. In pursuance of this idea, she told him she was sorry he had established himself with Mr. Bathurst at Baggswater. ‘You could have had a capital studio here, Lionel, and I could have peeped in on you sometimes, without feeling that I was interrupting Mr. Bathurst,’ she urged, in reference to her proposition.

‘You can do that now, Marian; the “Battle of the Bards” doesn’t occupy much of his time just at present; he has got an idea of another subject from the same poem in his head—Venus herself luring Tannhauser up the fatal mountain; so he is letting himself lie fallow until he can meet with a model for Venus.’

‘I wonder if he will find one,’ Mrs. Sutton replied, looking round towards the man under discussion and her sister. The latter looked fair enough to be a model for the goddess of beauty at the moment. The notion that Frank Bathurst might think her so, and perhaps let it be known that he thought so, to the overthrowing of Mrs. Sutton’s claims to be first always, roused all the sleeping tigress vanity that was always there, even if couchant, in Marian’s character.

‘I was looking at Trixy, hoping she would do,’ she said, carelessly turning towards Lionel again; ‘she has good features—perfect, I suppose they may be called,—and nice violet eyes; but she is no Venus.’

‘Bathurst will not readily find a better type.’

‘It’s a very usual English type, however,’ Mrs. Sutton pursued. She could not bear that her own brother should admire her own sister. ‘A very usual English type—fine and fleshy, and wide-eyed; more a Juno than a Venus, isn’t she, Mark?’

Mr. Sutton, who had just come in with Edgar Talbot, seated himself by his wife before he answered—

‘I am not sure that my ideas about the respective goddesses are very clear: what is the question?’

‘Mr. Bathurst wants a face to paint Venus from: Trixy will not do.’

‘No; but his cousin, Miss Lyon, will,’ Edgar Talbot exclaimed. Then he felt annoyed with himself for saying it, or thinking it; and more horribly annoyed still at the fact of the relationship rising to his recollection. ‘That mother of hers will harass Blanche into marrying the fellow,’ he thought angrily; and then he determined that he would tell Lionel to keep his friend away from his (Edgar’s) house on Trixy’s

account. 'It will never do to give him the freedom of the place; Lionel will quite understand that,' he said to himself. Yet it did not give him any great uneasiness to see that already Trixy and Mr. Frank Bathurst were talking a duet, apparently very much to their own satisfaction.

'My experience of men with those heavenly blue eyes is, that they

fall in love with every loveable earthly creature they meet.' Trixy remembered her sister's words, as Mr. Bathurst looked at her while telling her some art story, until he grew confused in the telling. Trixy was not sure that she hoped her sister's experience might be exceptional; but she was sure that Frank Bathurst's eyes were of the most heavenly blue.

THE DUKE'S ANSWER.

A MODERN MYTH.

'An answer trips not ever off the tongue.
A sign may speak although the voice be mute;
And silence, with the finger on the lip,
Hath pointed many a man to death and doom.'

THE Lady Bertha had a game to play.
Though born of gentle blood, the maid was poor,
In all, alas! that gilds poor virtue's crown.
A worldly matron aunt, and the sharp round
Of three full London seasons, did their best
To cultivate her taste for strawberry leaves.
What flower might blossom, or what fruit might set
Within the coronal that clips the brow
Was as a thought uncared-for or undreamed,
By all save Bertha; and she hushed it down
Deep in the darkness of her troubled heart.
The duke was old; and youth is youth; and love
Must find its equal in all things—or die.

Badly the Lady Bertha played her game,
And yet she won; as dicers, reckless grown,
Set the dice reeling, and then start to find
The winning figure uppermost at last
Refused to all their steady-measured throws.
The game was won: the duke was at her feet.

Did triumph move her, with a regal air,
To bid him rise and take the conqueror's meed?
Or did she dally with her prize, and make
Sweet favour sweeter as more hard to win?

Neither. She silent stood and looked aghast
As one who sees the spectre of her fear
Rather than living substance of her hope.
She reddened upward to the marble brow
As though her purpose flew upon her face
And struck her suddenly with one quick blow
To shame her in her youth and maidenhood.

Her better impulse was to say him nay.
Then came the swift, strong trouble of the world,
And all that world would say: its jeer—its laugh,
Its 'Ah, poor thing! she sentimental grew:
You heard—you saw—she jilted the old duke:

She thought, perchance, upon that poor lieutenant
 Who wooed her all his life, from boy to man;
 Who, as he should do, slipped aside and let
 The rich duke take his place. Thank you—some ice:
 The air is heavy; hark! the waltz begins.*

The gentle blood in my lord duke perceived
 The shadow of constraint on that flushed brow;
 And gave her time.

So she, once more alone,
 Stood tracing wave-like circlets on the wall
 That seemed to course about a ship at sea,
 Till the room reeled around her. All she felt
 Was sudden respite, mercifully sent
 As unto one whose eyes the glimmering axe
 Has dazzled like to a departing sun
 That looks its last upon a world of joy.
 'Twas respite; but not riddance. All she knew
 Was that her answer would be looked for when
 Red-branded autumn burned upon the woods
 And the strayed-berries tangled in her path,*
 And the wild equinox brought back to land
 The ship 'True Heart.'

At that her heart made pause,
 And all her thoughts grew tangled as the ways
 In moody autumn when the weeds run wild.
 What was that ship to her?

It once was well
 Through dull long nights to dream about the ship,
 And through pale visions watch the tiger-leap
 Of hungry waves that broke about her prow:
 To list in waking fancy to the strain
 Of groaning timbers, as the parted hulk
 Let in grim death along the bounding swell
 That upward sprang and rode the startled deck;
 Then start, and shriek, and crave for morn to break
 The shuddering horrors of the darkened deep.

'Twas other now. Her end, long-hoped, was gained.
 The strawberry leaves were straying to her feet,
 A little twisting of the web of wiles,
 A little winding of the threads of fate,—
 And then the garland for the duchess' brow!

The golden year was rounding to its close
 The curl of the eternal serpent grew
 Almost a ring of days. Before the gale
 Autumn let fall her burthen of the boughs.
 Along the tangled path the strayed leaves trailed;
 And by the high-swelled margin of the brook
 The dying season lay with hair all loose,
 Grassing the waters.

* The word *strawberry* is from the Anglo-Saxon, and means the *stray*, *strewed*, or *strawed-berry*, so named from the irregular shoots sent forth by the plant. The *strawberry leaf*, it scarcely need be said, is the ornament of the ducal coronet.

Gales sped back the ship;
The ship 'True Heart' brought Horace Vernon home.
Nay, more—such sports will fickle fortune play—
To-night he comes; to-night, too, comes the duke:
Horace to end that broken game at chess
Left but half-played the day he sailed to sea,—
(Bertha had kept the board untouched till now!)
The duke to take his answer, and bear home
A bride, or leave a heartless jilt in scorn.

The two were seated by the Indian board.
Her white hand slid an easy pawn aside,
And captured Horace's chief man at arms.
He took reprisal through the breach thus left,
Seizing her bishop by the bi-forked crown.
She stood rebuked. 'Twas a strange oversight
Were her thoughts wandering? *He* was all himself,
As ripe for battle as when rooted fast
Upon the 'True Heart's' deck, 'mid battering guns,
He won that wound that crippled his best arm.
She would do battle, too. So, now more 'ware,
She (gazing meanwhile on his rest-slung arm)
Career'd her knight into her foe's strong hold.
A move or two, and all the game seem'd hers.
His one hand seem'd to combat ill 'gainst two.
Or, were his thoughts, too, wandering?—At that
She paused again, and fell in musing mood.

Soon, all the present melted from her view,
Save but the chequered board, of dark and light
By turns, as were her hopes of rescue near,
And one poor, broken, standard-bearing pawn.
The silent board became alive with dreams.
The serried line of battle, moving on,
Was closing round one small devoted band.
The captain of that band—a wounded man—
Lifting his bright face loyal to the last,
Held fast a banner in his unsmit hand,
And gallantly went down to death. His corse
Lay trampled; and his red-robed freres
Gave way. Anon, a black funereal band,
Priest-headed, came and bore the dead to dust.
Kings followed, mourning; and one queenly form
Wearing a crown upon her shame-flushed brow,
Stood bowed above the red grave of the man
Who died so loveless—yet with love so near!

The board grew dim. Her streaming tears flowed fast,
Betraying all her heart. She rose, and turned,
And would have hid her anguish from his sight.
But he had watched her, moved as she was moved,
By fears of lonely life and loveless death
For her who sat so silent, facing him
With the wan aspect of a soul all lost
That wanders wide of heaven for its sins.
Thus, as she stood, forbearing now no more
To call her back from that distempered dream
That filled her eyes with waters of dismay,
He breathed an old ancestral name; a name

Not hers, but of a warrior maid who bore
Her father's crest in many a holy war ;
A name she ever bore in those old days
Of infant courtship, lisped beside the brook.

The dear old name ! So childlike sweet of old !
The martial beauty of it struck her home
As with a sense of high and strong resolve
Hid in her nature, waiting but the call
Of some true soul to rouse it into act.
So, making one brief struggle of weak shame
At thought of that poor dukedom and its duke,
She lifted up her sudden eyes to his.

An instant movement drew her to his side ;
And to his shoulder fell her drooping head,
Like a rath snowdrop.

But the while she leaned,
Safe as a plumeless bird in nested brake,
The air filled full with life—and spring come back—
And all the winter wandered from the world,—
Came ushered footsteps up the soundless stair ;
And in the open door, lo—the duke !

What need we more ? The better game was played.
Her early error wept for and atoned,
The Lady Bertha proved a loyal wife.
Her feet, love-guided to the nobler path,
Trod firm, and no more walked the slippery ways
Of worldlings. Still she dreamed ; but dreamed no more
Of gilded coronals. Her heart has found
Its rest—it may be on a troubled wave
Angels alone can smoothe with halcyon wing.
But when the noisy traffic of the world
Jars on her sense, and all its poor vain pomp
Rolls past her as a cloud, her soul is far,
Far on the great wide waters with the brave.

ELEANORA L. HERVEY.







THE WINDING OF THE SKEIN.

THE orchard trees are white with snow,
 As they were white with bloom,
 Foam-white, and like a sea beneath
 The window of the room;
 And fitfully an April sun
 Now went, now gleam'd again,
 But longest gleam'd, I think, to see
 The winding of the skein.

We were two sisters, Maud and I,
 And dwelt, as still we dwell,
 In the old house among the trees
 Our mother loved so well;
 A few old friends we had, and priz'd,
 Nor others sought to gain,
 But chiefly one whose name recalls
 The winding of the skein.

Our artist-neighbour, Clement, loved
 The orchard like a boy,
 The blossom-roof, the mossy boughs
 Made half his summer joy;
 And like a brother in our hearts
 He grew in time to reign,—
 And this was he whose name brings back
 The winding of the skein.

There was a fourth that day. You guess
 The story ere 'tis told:
 Our cousin back from Paris,—gay,
 Nor coy, nor over-bold;
 But used to homage, used to looks,
 There was no need to feign,
 As Clement found ere they began
 The winding of the skein.

I saw them as they met, and read
 The wonder in his face,
 And how his artist-eye approved
 Her beauty, and the grace
 That kindled an admiring love
 His heart could not restrain,
 Though hard he strove with it, until
 The winding of the skein.

The idle hours with idle toil
 We sped, and talked between:
 With all her skill our cousin wrought
 A 'broider'd banner screen:
 And so it chanc'd that Clement's aid
 She was so glad to gain,
 And he—could he refuse to help
 The winding of the skein?

Ring after ring the golden floss
 About his fingers roll'd:
 He thought—' Her hair is brighter yet,
 It has the truer gold.

I read this in his eyes, that strove
To turn from her in vain,
And loath'd my raven tresses through
The winding of the skein.

Round after round they wound before
The task was wholly done,
And if their fingers touched, the blood
Straight to his cheek would run;
And if the knotted silk she chid
Her voice through every vein
Went with a thrill of joy, throughout
The winding of the skein.

Round after round, until the end,
And when the end was there
He knew it not, but sat with hands
Rais'd in the empty air:
The ringing of the merry laugh
Startled his dreaming brain,
And then he knew his heart ensnar'd
In winding of the skein.

Beneath the apple-blooms that day,
And many a day they strayed:
I saw them through a mist of tears,
While hard for death I prayed.
And still those blossoms like these snows
Benumb my heart with pain,
And Maud knows well when I recall
The winding of the skein.

W. S.

SKETCHES OF THE ENGLISH BENCH AND BAR.

II.

Lord Westbury and the late Lord Justice Knight Bruce.

LORD WESTBURY'S portrait illustrates at once the truth and the fallacy of physiognomy. His countenance indicates his real, original nature, and so, in a certain sense, his character, but does not give you an idea of his habitual nature and his acquired character. Probably there has never been known a man of greater eminence and more enemies. You would not think so, looking at his portrait, or gazing on his countenance; it all seems so placid, so benignant, and so benevolent, you would be willing to believe him when he assured you—as he is fond of saying—with his peculiar calm, soft, lisping utterance, that ‘benevolence is the distinguishing feature of his character.’

You might perhaps associate with that calm countenance the idea of conscious intellect and superior power; you might imagine it united with a bland, half-compassionate bearing towards others; but you would not suppose that it covered, but scarce concealed, the most supercilious contempt of all, however elevated, except himself. You might fancy that those lips spoke calmly, perhaps softly, but you could not suppose that they lisped forth in such soft voice accents of almost genuine sweetness; and least of all would you realize that the words they lisped were almost always words of the most contemptuous or compassionate scorn.

Yet the features do not speak

falsely, and the countenance, after all, does not falsify physiognomy. They portray the man's original nature, the rest is his acquired character. The key to the puzzle is that Sir R. Bethell affected a character very different from his real nature. He has always assumed a far greater degree of scorn than he felt, though that was great enough, no doubt. He assumed an air of calm disdain, and it became habitual to him; he affected a calm, scornful utterance and manner, and it has become a second nature. And thus he acquired by degrees a sort of second character which is not natural, except so far as it no doubt is the growth of the pride of his nature. A single anecdote of him reveals this. There was an old chancery barrister with whom he used to contend, and of whom he used to speak with thrilling contempt. 'That fellow,' he lisped out, 'lost me a thousand a year with his infernal prolixity and incurable dullness.' Yet no sooner was he Chancellor than he presented the son of his old professional rival with a good place. Now there is the man in his double nature, his acquired habits of affected contempt springing from his intellectual pride, and his acts of real goodness springing from his natural kindliness. And he is a man to stand by his friends: a fine feature in a man's character. Beyond all doubt, Lord Westbury has that to be said in his favour, that he is a stanch friend, and never shrank from doing his best for any one who had served him. In this, perhaps, he is better than better men. But it illustrates his mixed character. There probably never was a man in whose character were mixed up such diverse elements natural and acquired. Hence the result—there never was a man more disliked or more beloved. And, paradoxical as it may appear, there really is some truth in his own idea of himself—the ex-chancellor is not a bad fellow. He will do kind things, but he never could resist the temptation of saying unkind things. His second nature is scorn of other men, and his luxury is sarcasm. The secret

of the dislike entertained for him is what perhaps an acute physiognomist might detect even in those bland, calm features—an overweening, egotistical confidence in his own superior intellect, and a profound scorn and contempt for other men. Coupled with the feeling arising from it is a great talent for sarcasm and an immense alacrity in its exercise, which of course is only another word for making enemies. Taking these elements of character into consideration, and looking again carefully at that fine countenance, possibly our readers may imagine him as Lord Derby graphically described him, as 'standing up and for upwards of an hour pouring upon the head of a political opponent a continuous stream of vitriolic acid.' Nothing less forcible than that remarkable expression could describe the biting, scorching sarcasm of the ex-chancellor. So he was when Sir Richard Bethell; and it is believed that there never was a man in the profession of whom so many pungent, sarcastic witticisms were reported. It is difficult to convey an idea of their effect as they were uttered in that calm, sweet, lisping voice, with such slowness of utterance and such blandness of countenance, with such an amusing contrast between the honied accents and the biting words. When the late Lord - Chancellor (Lord Cranworth) was Vice-Chancellor, Sir Richard spoke of him as 'that respectable old woman;' and once, when the Vice-Chancellor said he would 'turn the matter over in his mind,' Sir Richard turned round to his junior, and with his usual bland, calm utterance said, 'Take a note of that; his Honour says he will turn it over in what he is *pleased* to call his mind.' So when some one said of an attorney-general for whom he had a contempt, that it was a shame to put any one over his head, Sir Richard said, in the same calm, lisping accents, 'Head, did you say? Has he a head?' The exquisite effect of these sarcasms was so much the result of utterance that they could only be fully appreciated by those who heard them; but by attentively studying the features of

the portrait, and imagining a peculiarly soft, sweet, calm voice, uttering these stinging sayings, some idea may be formed of their effect on the delighted hearers. Being asked how he was getting on in an appeal before an archbishop, and his assessor, a learned doctor, he said, 'Getting on, did you say? How is it possible to get on before *two silly old men* who understand nothing whatever of the matter?' Arguing a case in error before the judges, one of them, for whom he had a dislike, asked him a question which somewhat pinched him, upon which he blandly replied, in his sweetest, softest accents, 'Before I answer the question, may I venture to entreat your lordship to reconsider it, for I am sure upon consideration you will perceive that it involves a *self-evident absurdity*.' It may seem scarcely credible that such things have been said; but such was the sweetness, calmness, and softness of the tone in which they were said, that, somehow, they passed by before those to whom they were addressed had received the shock of surprise, especially as the sting was always at the end, and Sir Richard went on with his argument as calm and unruffled as if he had just paid a happy compliment. It was the sublime of insolence: it was insolence sublimated almost to grandeur.

For his professional opponents and rivals he had an unbounded contempt; for all but one, that was Mr. Rolt, who, indeed, was the only one who was a match for him. Yet even to him he would assume his habitual air of calm superiority. 'So much' he said once when replying to him—'so much for my learned friend's first argument! But, my lords, as the paths of error are numerous, and devious, my learned friend has another argument, to which I will now advert.' Imagine this, spoken slowly, loftily, sweetly, lispingly! It was impossible to help smiling; and even Mr. Rolt, who is good-humoured and sensible, enjoyed it; and the judges laughed. But Sir Richard went on, loftily and lispingly, with that unapproachable air of superiority, in

which no man at the Bar or on the Bench, in living memory, ever resembled him. It was a peculiar feature of Sir Richard Bethell's character that his scorn was too lofty to have anything in it of a cunning or spite. It was lofty and overbearing, but there was nothing in it either of littleness or bitterness. Sir Richard's sarcasms were rather scornful than spiteful, and had often more of wit than bitterness. You saw that his object was rather to display his air of superiority and gratify his pride, than to give pain or wreak revenge. He was too proud for small resentments, and had too constant a sense of his own superiority to condescend to wrangle or to quarrel. He could not, for the world, have so compromised his dignity; and this dignity of tone and manner he never lost even while at the Bar.

This happy gift of dignity, with its alloy of sarcasm and scorn, he carried with him to the Woolstack and the House of Lords; and he quickly made every lord there of any mark or eminence, his foe—at least among the law lords, with whom he came, of course, more constantly in contest. His animosity to Lord Chelmsford—his contempt for Lord Cranworth—his scorn for Lord Wensleydale—all were unbounded, and could only be conveyed by his wonderful power of sarcasm. And, above all, he loved to show his contempt for the Common Law Judges, upon appeals. Reading a sentence from one of their judgments, he said to counsel, who attended to support it—'Pray, Mr. So-and-So, upon which of these propositions do you intend to rely? for you must perceive that they are utterly inconsistent.' His power of exciting enmity was unrivalled, and he revelled in it. He could throw into a few bland words, spoken in the calmest tone, a bitterness of sarcasm which would make a man his enemy for life. He was an embodiment of intellectual pride. He had the most unbounded confidence in his superiority to other men, even the very highest in his own profession, and loved to show his sense of it by the most intense

and impassioned scorn for them. Perhaps you might not have found it out from his features, but, being aware of it, possibly—turning to his portrait—you may fancy that you can read it there. At all events, if you ever saw and heard him—only for a moment—there could be no mistake about it. The first words he uttered would suffice to give the impression, at once, of superior intellect and of unmeasurable pride. The spirit of scorn and sarcasm seems native to his breast, and to breathe in every tone of his voice, which even affects more scorn than he feels. How unlike Sir Alexander Cockburn—easy, natural, and genial: whose voice rings out in bright and lively tones of good-heartedness!

There could not be a greater contrast than the portraits and the characters of these two eminent men present; yet they were for many years associated together. They were law officers of the crown at the same time; they were Benchers of the same Inn; and Sir Alexander will tell a good story, how Sir Richard once said to him, in a tone of indescribable compassion, 'My dear fellow, equity will swallow up your common law.' 'I don't know about that,' said Sir Alexander, 'but you'll find it rather hard of digestion!' The remark and the repartee very well convey the characteristics of the two men,—the one all supercilious pride and scorn, the other of a quick, lively, generous spirit.

With Lord Westbury may very fitly be associated the late Lord Justice Knight Bruce. Alas! we have lost him!

Lord Justice Knight Bruce had been nearly twenty years on the Bench; and as he left the Bar before Sir R. Bethell became great there, they did not have any rivalry as advocates. But they came fearfully into collision when Sir Richard had become great, and came before the Lord Justice as an advocate. The Lord Justice, as a veteran and venerable lawyer, deeply versed in the principles of equity, could not brook the overbearing tone of Sir Richard, and the profound scorn with which he always spoke of views opposed to his own. And as

they almost equally excelled in the fatal gift of sarcasm, it may be imagined what scenes ensued.

The Lord Justice was a man of greater depth than Sir Richard, though not of such brilliant ability; and you could see, from his features, that he was a man of deep thought and reflective mood. You would not guess, however, that he had a vein of dry, grave humour, which he delighted in displaying; and this was one of the traits which excited Sir Richard's scorn. It marked the distinction between the two men that though the Lord Justice was often sarcastic, Sir Richard was never humorous. And though the wit of the Lord Justice perhaps was sarcastic, it was rarely ever so severe, so scorching as Sir Richard's. There was always a touch of humour about it, and a tone of good-humour, quite distinguishing it from the great advocate's. The Lord Justice had a grave, solid, old-fashioned, emphatic way of speaking, which very much enhanced the effect of his wit, or humour; and the difference was, that he delighted in displaying his wit, while Sir Richard delighted in uttering sarcasms. The Lord Justice had, indeed, a kind of grave judicial waggery about him exceedingly droll. He has been known to deliver a whole judgment in the gravest tone possible—but one piece of solemn waggery from beginning to end. Such was his judgment in the case of a suit between an attorney and his wife, about a separation deed, the dispute having arisen upon the disposition of her separate property. 'The court,' commenced the Lord Justice, 'has been now for several days occupied in the matrimonial quarrels of a solicitor and his wife. He was a man not unaccustomed to the ways of the softer sex, for he already had nine children, by three successive wives. She, however—herself a widow—was well informed of all these antecedents; and, it appears, did not consider them any objection to their union: and they were married. No sooner were they united, however, than they were, unhappily, disunited by unhappy disputes as to

her property. These disputes disturbed even the period usually dedicated to the soft delights of matrimony, and the honeymoon was occupied by endeavours to induce her to exercise a testamentary power of appointment in his favour. She, however, refused, and so we find that, in due course, at the end of the month, he brought home, with some disgust, his still intestate bride. The disputes continued; until at last they exchanged the irregular quarrels of domestic strife for the more disciplined warfare of Lincoln's Inn and Doctors' Commons.' And so on, in the same vein of irony, to the end. So, in another celebrated judgment of his, about the 'Agapemone,' which he held up to ridicule and scorn. So in a case as to the construction of a will. After counsel had been hard at work all day contending for different meanings, the Lord Chief Justice thus, with the utmost solemnity, commenced his judgment—'If,' he said, 'the spirits of the departed are ever permitted to be conscious of things which take place here below, and if the spirit of the testator has been cognizant of the discussion which has been going on here to-day, he must have been, no doubt, considerably astonished—perhaps I might say disgusted—at the intentions which have been ascribed to him, and the various meanings which have been put upon his words. Nevertheless, we must presume that he intended what, as lawyers, we make his words to mean—no matter whether he meant it or not.' All this, mind, in the most solemn and sentient, easy tone, and with a peculiarly oracular air, which immensely enhanced the effect of this judicial waggery. It is impossible to conceive a greater power of grave and ironical ridicule than was possessed by the Lord Justice; and there are few judgments of his which are not relieved by the introduction of some play of humour or some stroke of wit. His was a mind which gladly relieved the tension of severe and continuous thought by such sallies of wit and humour. There was nothing ill-natured in his

character; and though he was so fond of it that he would not abstain merely lest it should give pain, he did not practise it at all, for the sake of giving pain. It was simply his diversion, his delight, his enjoyment to be witty whenever he could. If to be witty he must be sarcastic, why he would be so; but his object was only to be witty. He had a little harmless vanity to be thought witty; and being a man of a long and enlarged experience, and of a deep, cultivated, and reflective mind, he was never trivial, though playful in his wit, and never vulgar though familiar in his pleasantries. He was pedantic in his tone, with a grave, formal, emphatic, measured way of speaking, more resembling the late Lord Chief Baron's than any other judge; and—like him—belonging to an old school, now passing away.

The twenty years' difference in the professional life of the Lord Justice and the late Lord Chancellor mark, indeed, very well the boundary between the past and the present race of advocates. The Lord Justice belongs to the age of Sir Thomas Wilde, and Sir William Follett, and Sir Frederick Pollock, and Sir F. Thesiger, and Sir F. Kelly, all of whom have now left the Bar; and the last of whom are, one by one, leaving the Bench. Long may they linger there, for they represent a school of greater depth of learning and breadth of mind than the present, for the most part, are: and the distinction is well illustrated by the difference, between the thoughtful, well-stored mind of the Lord Justice and the more brilliant and showy abilities of the late Lord Chancellor.

The judgment of Lord Justice Knight Bruce in the case of the 'Agapemone' was, beyond all doubt, the richest specimen of judicial irony ever uttered. Reading a few passages of it, and then looking at the portrait of the Lord Justice, the reader will, on the one hand, get infinitely more of the relish and enjoyment of it; and on the other hand get a truer idea of the judicial character of the Lord Justice than he possibly could derive

either from the portrait or the perusal. The reader should bear in mind that the Lord Justice was eminently grave, slow, solemn, precise, and sententious in his utterance, and this immensely enhanced the 'humour' of the thing.

It was an application, it should be observed, on the part of an infant, that a proper guardian should be appointed, and that his father should be restrained from taking possession of him. In the gravest and most sententious tone, but at the same time the deepest irony, he spoke thus:—

'His parents are both living; one of them, his father, a native, as I collect, of Wales, having been educated with a view to become a minister of the Church of England. I do not, however, collect that he proceeded beyond deacon's orders, or that he now considers himself to be a member of that church; nor does it appear that he has any present or prospective preferment, office, employment, business, fortune, means, or source of income whatever.' (There was a world of judicial irony, of grave, solemn waggery in this careful, precise enumeration and exclusion of every conceivable source of income.) 'The wife, the petitioner's mother, is one of the daughters of a gentleman of good fortune, a lady in good circumstances, and a person of respectability, with a portion of some thousands of pounds; the marriage, whether equal or unequal otherwise, seems, in that respect at least, to have been unequal, for the husband had not, I believe, any property. It took place without the consent of the mother, and it seems, in a considerable degree, ascribable to the influence and ascendancy over her mind which must, I fear, be said unhappily for her, to have been acquired and exercised by a fanatic or a pseudo-fanatic preacher, who styled himself the servant of the Lord; who seems to have acted less as a "go-between" than as a spiritual director in forming this and other matches between endowed ladies and such of his followers or associates of the other sex as were judged fit for his purpose. One of

these was the person (the petitioner's father), whom Miss Agnes N—— seems to have been led to believe it was the will of God to reveal, through the servant of the Lord, that she should marry, and whom she did so marry very much on that ground. She married without a settlement: her fortune, consequently, came into his power. The want of a settlement was, however, not through oversight: she mentioned the subject to him it appears, at the same time mentioning a promise, probably connected with it, which she had made to her parents. It appears that not quite three weeks before the marriage he was moved, and permitted himself, to write to her, this all but impossible letter.' Then the Lord Justice proceeded to read the 'all but impossible letter' in tones of irony which made it for those who heard it a treat they will never forget. It ran thus:—

'Let not your heart be troubled under your present circumstances, neither let it be afraid at what friends or foes may suggest. Abide in the Spirit and will of God, and then will your peace be like a river, wide and overflowing, and your soul will be borne sweetly along the stream of time until it reaches the ocean of eternal rest and quiet. What I say unto you I say also unto Harriet and Clara' (her sisters). 'Assure them of my love, and let them trust themselves to be carried by faith, &c. My beloved Agnes, I must write to you just what the Spirit leads me to do. This I do with the more confidence, because I believe you have an ear to what the Lord may say unto you through him that loveth you. You mention your desire to have a settlement of your property upon yourself. This, I assure you, would be very agreeable to my own feelings, and is so still; but last evening waiting on God this matter came quite unexpectedly before me. I had entirely put it away from my thoughts, leaving it to take its course as you might be led to act; but God will not have it so. He shows me that the principle is entirely contrary to God's word, and altogether

**LORD WESTBURY.**



THE LATE LORD JUSTICE KNIGHT BRUCE.

at variance with that confidence which is to exist between us, who are of one spirit. This desire on your part must be abandoned; give it up to God, and show that you can trust his faithfulness, and I can assure you that the confidence you repose in him will not be disappointed. As regards the promise you made to your parents, any promise made when you were unconverted, and which was not in accordance with the word of God, you are not to abide by; neither would it be right in you to adhere to it.

'I must bid you farewell, and believe me to abide in much love,

'Yours affectionately in the
'everlasting covenant,

'BROTHER THOMAS.

'The testimony of Jesus will be proclaimed in "Adullam" on Sunday.'

After reading this 'all but impossible letter,' the Lord Justice proceeded:

'Even this unparalleled performance failed to open the lady's eyes, and, her marriage taking place, she became annexed, and an addition to the school, or suite, of "the servant of the Lord." The bride and bridegroom visited various places from the time of their marriage for more than half a year. During the latter part of that time they were at Weymouth, and lodged at a house where "the servant of the Lord" was also living; and here the lady appears to have received from her husband, and not from him alone, treatment of a coarse, harsh, and unmanly description. In January, 1846, "the servant of the Lord" and some of his followers and associates went, I believe, professionally to Bridgewater, leaving the lady and her husband behind. Some of these, including the husband, but not his wife, were soon, it seems, sent for. The summons—which professed, I believe, to be a call to attend a spiritual tea-party—was obeyed, and he went, leaving his wife behind him. The husband sent for his clothes, and then, having received them, he despatched to his wife this indescribable communication:—

"MY BEST BELOVED,—I herewith enclose you a small portion: eat,

drink, yea, drink abundantly; and let your soul delight in fatness; let the will of God be your home and resting-place. 'The servant of the Lord' told me that you would not be in your present state unless you had rebelled months ago, and thus you will suffer for it in not being able to go about with me as you otherwise would; but when I see you I will tell you all about it; for the present abide quietly where you are, and go on as if I were with you. We are separated, but we are not severed, and I abide, dearest, the same your unchanging and affectionate
BROTHER THOMAS."

'When,' continued the Lord Justice, 'it is known that the writer of this letter did not return, but that his departure from her was the commencement of a total separation, such a composition may seem to be in the last degree perplexing.' Then after commenting upon the desertion in terms in which indignation absorbed irony, the Lord Justice resumed his tone of irony. 'Such a course of conduct seems inexplicable, except on the supposition that the influence and ascendancy of the person calling himself "the servant of the Lord" had been exerted, and prevailed over "Brother Thomas," as strangely as they had at one time over his wife. I collect that after the marriage she exhibited symptoms of insubordination, not towards her husband, but towards "the servant of the Lord;" attempted to shake her husband's allegiance to him, and was found out. However, upon these, or no more just grounds, "the servant of the Lord" took a dislike to the lady after the marriage, and did mainly, if not solely, influence her husband's mind in his ill-treatment and desertion of her. No ought it probably to be ascribed to his own spontaneous feelings that he wrote to her the coarse and shameful letter dated the "Agapemone," which the Lord Justice proceeded to read, and which had this passage and others similar: 'I write merely to inform you of my determination concerning you: God is pure and holy—I am His and He is mine, and you are mine; and I am resolved to use the authority God has

given me, and for this purpose I can and will compel you to live where and how I please, and subject you to my will and authority, through God's pure love to me; and in this I have hitherto yielded to you the greatest indulgence, and you have abused the liberty and independence I trusted you with as you have abused your every other blessing. I have therefore felt the necessity of making you aware that I can and will direct your life, and this I will cause you to know by my actions and not only by my words. Should you again write, or speak contrary to my wishes, I will immediately remove your residence, and take the child under my own eye, and superintend the expenditure of the money for God's glory,' &c.

'The power of "the servant of the Lord,"' gravely continued the Lord Justice, 'over the husband's mind seems to have remained undiminished, although the lady appears to have been cured. It is in such a state of things that he has been endeavouring to acquire the possession and custody of the son, which would, of course, involve the care and direction of his education. But there are other facts in the case, and other circumstances to be considered. To what abode is he to take the child? None is suggested, except the somewhat mysterious establishment, of which it seems necessary to say a few words. It appears that "the servant of the Lord" has founded or formed a canonistical establishment, which, though not on the Euripus, but on the Bristol Channel, he has denominated "Agapemone," a name, no doubt, adopted in order to make the people of Somersetshire understand or guess its object, which, however, unluckily, I fear, few either there or elsewhere in any very clear manner do. The establishment scarcely seems to be a convent either in connection with the Greek Church or otherwise. Its inmates, who are not a few, and are of each sex, can hardly be nuns or friars, for some, though not all of them, are married couples, and the men and women are not separated. They, however, call themselves, and address each other,

as brothers and sisters, and there appears to be something of a religious kind, whether really or only professedly, in the nature or design of the institution, which might perhaps be described as a spiritual boarding-house, though to what kind of religion, if any, the inmates belong does not, I think, appear. I believe that they do not attend any place of worship, in or out of the Establishment. They sing hymns, I think, addressed to the Supreme Being; but, as I collect, they do not, in the sense of supplication or entreaty to God, pray at all. The Agapemonians appear to set a high value upon bodily exercise of a cheerful and amusing kind. Their stables, according to the description given of them, must be unexceptionable. It does not appear that the Agapemonians hunt, but they seem distinguished both as cavaliers and charioteers. They play moreover, frequently or occasionally, at lively and energetic games, such as "hockey," ladies and all, so that their lives may be considered less as ascetic than frolicsome. The particulars, however, of the Agapemonian's exterior existence, not being open to general observation, are little, if at all, known beyond their own boundary. Now this is the establishment in which the father in this case has been, and is, one of the dwellers. He has, I apprehend, no other home, and thither, accordingly, I suppose that he would take his son. But God forbid that I should be accessory to condemning any child to such a state of probable debasement! As lief would I have on my conscience the responsibility of consigning this boy to a camp of gipsies!

These extracts illustrate better than any words of ours could possibly do the judicial character of the Lord Justice. They are so characteristic of him, indeed, that no other judge upon the bench could have pronounced it, and any one acquainted with the judicial character and style of our judges would recognize it in a moment: perhaps any one of its more remarkable passages—nay, there is scarcely a sentence in it which would not be

recognized as *his*. The judgment, it may be added, was delivered sixteen years ago: the Lord Justice had then been several years upon the bench: he was still, at the time of writing these lines, in the full exercise of his great judicial abilities in the high office which he had so long filled: he had thus been more than twenty years upon the bench, and had previously been, we believe, over thirty years at the bar; and these simple facts, taken together, will amply suffice to show that Lord Justice Knight Bruce was one of the most wonderful men that we have ever known in modern times upon

the bench; nor was there any one in Westminster Hall who could compare with him except the late Lord Chief Baron, Sir F. Pollock.

We have lately lost both these eminent judges: the first by death, the latter, we rejoice to say, only by retirement. But not the less—rather all the more on that account—are they retained among our ‘Sketches;’ for they both belonged to a great school of scholarlike and accomplished lawyers, who have left none behind to rival them in reputation; and who, for that reason, pre-eminently deserve to be remembered.

FASHIONABLE TEA PARTIES.

COULD any candid observer fail to have remarked, in the events of the past season, one new and striking feature?

I allude, not so much to the increase of population as to that of tea parties. The cup of tea at five o'clock has (to speak figuratively), crept insidiously into the heart of our social life. The advance, secret at first, then accepted with apology, has burst this summer across the frontier of our Society, and bids fair to drown in a weak and sugary element the fair surface of our afternoon existence. To analyze the states of this invading custom will be a profitable and instructive employment for my pen, and your thoughts, my beloved readers. Is there reason in the roasting of eggs—how much more in the drinking of tea!

The subject, then, before us is one fraught with interest of the most solemn nature, and may most properly be divided into two parts. In giving of tea at five o'clock there is as much difference of mode and usage as in hairdressing and in lifting of hats for salutation.

First, then, let there be one great line of demarcation between

The Tea Suggestive
and

The Tea Impressive.

The latter, being the evil division, is, like all things evil, manifold in its forms, and may be subdivided into the Tea Economical and the Tea Magnificent.

Tell me, says Carlyle, the religion of a people and I will describe their character. Let us first seek the motive of the above-named tea-parties and then describe the result. No woman, astute, and versed in self-knowledge, and her daughter in the knowledge of mankind, but knows that the mind is reached through the body; i. e., if you make a man thoroughly comfortable in your house he will come there again. This is true logic; and I need not say what is the object, the motive, the religion, of the well-regulated and maternal householder of Mayfair and Belgravia. Now for the result.

‘We are at home about five, Mr. Fitz So-and-so, always; come when you like;’ or,

‘Do come in the afternoon about tea-time you know: we are always at home.’

You happen to be in Eaton Place about five, and you ask casually if Lady S—— is at home.

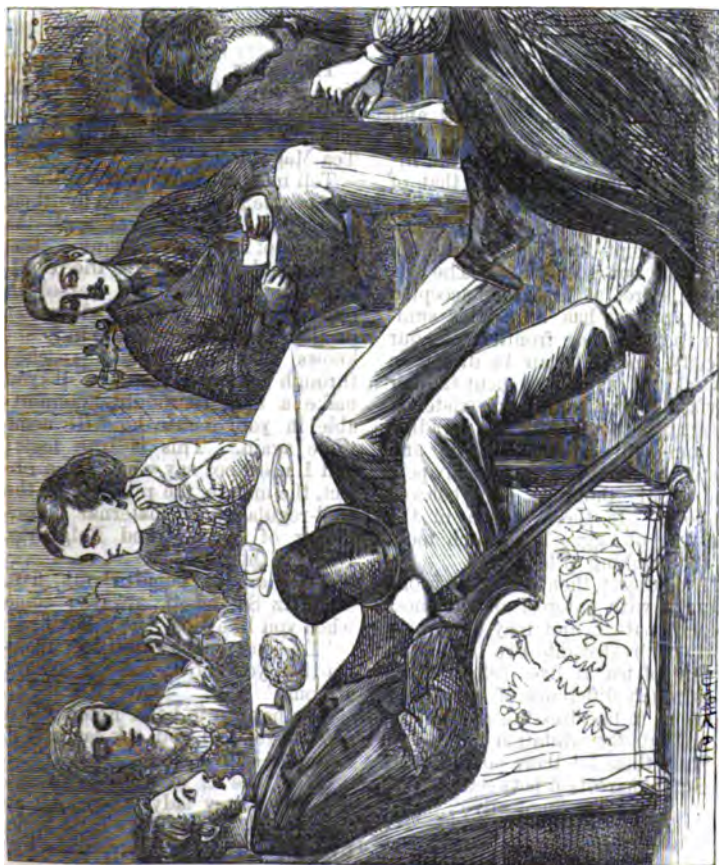
‘Yes, she is at home.’ In the large room my lady is working at that pretty lace-work, a little table by her with her scissors, and a big

sweet rose in a specimen glass. There is a cunningly stuffed arm-chair for you; there are sofas that you can sit on with your hat beside you; not barricaded by unwieldy writing-tables as are some sofas, like a fortified town. Julie, whom you are rather fond of, is playing softly at the end of the room, with the light behind her from an open window with flowers. Looloo is writing notes in the little room with red blinds and more flowers.

Julie comes to talk to you; she shows you her dear little workbag with the fox's head, and wishes you would tell her the exact size that she should make her cigar-case of 'ticking.' Mamma rings the bell. John brings a snug three-legged

table out of a corner; there is a shiny white cloth and glittering silver, and little flat cups, and round buns with currants in them—not muffins, they grease your gloves, and the girls have voted them low form, though to be sure how good they are! Your particular friend 'Whatisname,' of the Coldstreams, comes in, and Looloo makes tea. You feel as if you had always been there; you have plenty to say, and you forget the existence of your hat; the tea is hot, and strong, and brown. Looloo has a wicked little apron with pockets, and blue bows at the corners, and makes tea perfectly.

Mamma is charming; she does not make love to you more than you



Drawn by Fane Wood.

like, nor tell her daughter to 'sing that sweet song, dearest, that So-and-so admired so much;' but she talks so well that you find yourself the pleasantest man of your acquaintance, and you go away, with a little sigh of regret, and with the impression that, after all, what a shame it is, the way they abuse mothers-in-law. One could fancy Lady S——, now!

You find yourself pretty often in Eaton Place. Next time you go there is a new face there, a very pretty, cheery girl, Looloo's special chum, also an old fellow who is talking family with Mamma.

Julie is quite charming, in a pink skirt and little silver buttons: she tells you her confidential opinions, gives you her particular photo-book to look at; and she sings you French romances that gloat and quiver through the twilight.

Naturally you go again; so do Whathisname, and the pretty girl, and the old fellow; so does every one that is nice, and likes nice things. The room is never full of stupid callers. A whole family of large women is not announced during your visit, to sit stolidly before you and ask questions; nor do sudden and affectionate incursions of near relations take place and engross your hostesses.

The girls are prettily dressed, work pretty work. There are scraps and bits of bright colours, and little baskets on three-legged tables, 'suggestive' of cricket-belts, cigar-cases, slippers, and the like. You do not sit on stiff, slender chairs, at a certain distance from a thick table, with idle hands on your laps or smoothing uneasy hats. There is no glare of light, rosy blinds half down, cool jealousies and green plants; all dark, cool, fragrant, in summer; rosy, cosy, warm in early spring or winter. Possibly in private, Julie and Looloo may squabble, Mamma may scold, but to the eye of the tea-drinking guests all is harmonious—'Suggestive.'

How different is the Tea Impressive. Balls, papa will not allow.

Dinners are so costly—so unremunerative. You must receive or be forgotten—A drum—No, not a

drum! the young men will not come to a drum—and it entails supper and lighting. Mamma and the daughters cogitate. Give them tea—yes—five o'clock tea. 'Mrs. Uphill at home Tuesdays and Fridays in June, four to seven.'

Cards are sent to all and sundry, for one may as well be popular—*vive l'économie.*

Weak tea in the dining-room, made by the cook and ladies' maids, to be drunk standing in a thorough draught, with your heels on Lady Longtrain's gown, and your toes under the ponderous footstep of Mrs. Rightaway; at the door upstairs stands your hostess in lilac silk and a sweet smile; the inevitable white poodle under her arm—'Is it not a dear doggums? So good of you to come.'

'What a charming little do—' your pretty speech is broken by the vociferation of the butler, and by a push from behind and before. The room like the stairs is choked with 'lovely women;' a hothouse full of artificial flowers. You find yourself close face to face with three tall young ladies, whose faces you are tired of, but to whom you never have been introduced; you are hemmed in and feel like a fool, when you smile feebly and bow, to some one who is recognizing you from the other end of the room.

There are the most wonderful old ladies. It is solemn and silent, and yet there is a distracting buzz of voices. Faint moaning from an inner chamber betokens music. A few victims are seated near the performer, who sings in a ghastly manner, with a sense of being unappreciated. No music has been preconcerted. The tenor has been dragged from a group of ladies and coerced into a song, against his will. A stout young lady thumps and rushes on the piano; nobody listens, but a heavy silence is enforced. On every face a gloomy patience or a sullen smile is seen. The girls watch each other's bonnets; the old ladies tread upon each other, and push and go up and down stairs. There is generally one man there; he casts uneasy glances round him, and is afraid of

so many women; his countenance does not conceal that he is bored and wishes he were at his club; he is chiefly happy if he can find an acquaintance, when he professes a hypocritical interest and fervour, squeezes himself behind her into a chair, and talks under his breath, and is absorbed.

But he escapes when he can, and vows silently, but solemnly, that 'never, never.' When all are gone, it is seven o'clock; Mrs. Uphill and the daughters eat up the remains of the bread and butter, and congratulate themselves on the success of their party.

The 'Magnificent' differs from the 'Economical' chiefly in regard to the food provided for the bodily sustenance of the invited. Weariness unutterable for the mind still pervades the crowd, and seats are wanting to rest the limbs where-with; but there is claret cup, champagne cup, grapes, strawberries, and, O pregnant fact! there are more men.

The Tea Magnificent is generally indicative of a brother, one or more, and he brings his friends or ought to do so. It is not a case of Tuesdays and Fridays in June. It is a great effort—'Suprême,' as Victor Hugo would say; a little buffet in the back drawing-room, mingled sounds of Campana's duets, and the clatter of spoons.

'Io vivo e t'amo,'—'iced coffee, please.'

'Non posso vivere senza di te.'

'Champagne or claret cup?'

Lady and Miss de Tankerville, Sir Roger de Tankerville.

'Ah, ha, mio be-ne.' One requires here two ears at least to take in the combination. Useful young ladies untie their bonnet-strings after artful surprise at being called to sing the duet they had specially prepared for the occasion. The hostess prowls amiably and picks off the musical guests for a chorus. Sponge-cakes and fruit do not improve the voices, and the soprani never are in tune, but the 'Rondinella' is victimized, and as nobody listens it does not much matter. The hostess has been making pretty speeches to every one that she can,

and she makes the prettiest of all to the pet tenor, who is out of sorts because the man of all others whom he hates, and who sings his new song with the A sharp, which is his special hit, has been asked to sing before him. There is a lady singer with a wonderful gown and a silvery voice, but she won't sing a note, and the hostess devours her wrath as best she may, and pretends to understand and believe in the 'little cold' that causes the refusal. If the buffet be down stairs the scene of action is chiefly at doorways and on the staircase. Cunning and acquisitiveness are called into play. Dowagers 'spot' likely young men, and victims are sacrificed to hungry mothers; but take it altogether the 'temper of the mob' is a better one than at most public meetings; the men drink and are amenable; the old women eat and are content; the young ones have, or hope they have, some one to admire them, and a little business may be done with boudoirs and back stairs, but it is always lame, and I should never advise it except in extreme and desperate cases. Flirting in bonnet strings and a hot room is never good for much. Cornets or very young clerks are possible, but the full-grown object is apt to have an engagement at the club or a quiet little 'Suggestive' somewhere else, or a match at Lord's, and is impatient and distraught. With a social meeting, a gathering together of friends and acquaintances—such as the original tea party might suppose itself to mean, the Tea Impressive, whether economical or magnificent, has of course nothing in common. But—as a comprehensive mode of receiving acquaintances and friends—it is unrivalled in the annals of the past seasons, for it combines the two great elements of modern entertainment—it includes all and pleases none.

Some day, I live in hopes, that a spirited leader of fashion may arise and introduce a mode of entertainment more sensible and pleasing and equally general and impartial.

Instead of inviting to her house

more people than it will hold at the hour when open air and exercise ought to supplant airless rooms and crowded staircases, let her issue tickets entitling the bearer to such portion of delicacies at Gunter's or Brunette's as shall be equivalent to the feast she would offer them in her dining-room, to be obtained at what hour and on what day the possessor of the ticket shall choose. This would at once evince hospi-

talitv and avoid confusion; and the glorification of the giver of the tea impressive would be methinks, enhanced by the publicity of the matter. To the giver of the Suggestive I need offer no hint. To the fair Julie and the amiable Looloo I dedicate the motto—

Non posso vivere

Senza di'

Tea.



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WOMEN AND THEIR WAYS.



BY

TOM

SLENDER.

FROM the day when Eve first came before Adam, 'a woman fair and graceful spouse,' down to the present time in which we live, woman has been both the blessing and the curse of mankind. She has been the cause of strife and ruin, of misery and bloodshed among nations, and in domestic life has not unfrequently been the discordant and jarring element. Yet she is also the very type and embodiment of all grace and virtue, the source and centre of peace and reconciliation, the one gracious influence which softens and humanizes mankind, reconciling the contradictions of opposing wills and natures and bringing them into harmony by her healing presence. Poets have never ceased to sing her praises, and these songs have been among their best and happiest efforts. She has been their inspiration, awakening in them all their chivalry and love of the beautiful and pure. They who have, like Scott, spoken of her as capricious, have, like him, almost in the same breath laid at her feet the just tribute of their praise.

'O woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow
A ministering angel thou!'

There is no heart so dead to all good influence that is not touched by the exhibition of a woman's unselfish, undying love, which is ever ready to requite evil with good, and to forget the wrong that has been done in her desire to win back the affection that has strayed. She calmly waits her opportunity, 'hoping against hope,' and praying that it may come, and with a wondrous patience and winning grace welcomes the first indications of a return, and goes forth clad in robes of purity, forgiveness, and love to meet the wanderer and aid or hasten his faltering steps. There is no sight more beautiful than that of a woman's inexhaustible tenderness,

continually prompting her to give that ready sympathy which

'Angel hearts bestow

Who look for no return.'

Far back in our lives we can trace the hallowing influence of a woman's presence, the footprints of which have not yet been trodden out by time. The watchfulness of a mother's love, her unselfish care, her ready ear, and quick response to our childish griefs, have left an impression which nothing can efface, and which puts us in good-humour with all womankind. The memory of unnumbered blessings that have sprung from her gathers round us even in advanced life, when all feeling of romance has long since died away, and the very name of woman awakens in us feelings of reverent affection. Mrs. Norton's beautiful lines addressed to the Duchess of Sutherland are applicable to women generally.

'Like a white swan down a troubled stream,
Whose ruffling pinions hath the power to fling
Aside the turbid drops which darkly gleam
And mar the freshness of her snowy wing,
So (she) with queenly grace and gentle pride
Along the world's dark waves in purity doth
glide.'

But leaving for a moment this sentimental but just view of woman-kind, we will beguile ourselves with the consideration of some of those peculiarities which are exhibited in certain specimens of the fair sex. 'There is nothing more true than the old adage that 'all is not gold that glitters,' and it may be said with equal truth that all women are not fair. There are exceptions to every rule, and if we amuse ourselves for a time at the expense of those exceptional cases, we trust that we have already sufficiently guarded against the possibility of our being charged with insensibility to the power of woman's charms of mind and person.

Nature is full of exceptions to its ordinary rules, and incongruities and eccentricities are to be found in the very midst of its most beautiful works. It is therefore no reproach to the fair sex to say that some women have peculiar ways which would fairly puzzle the man who

had not been more or less acclimatized to them. 'Woman's at best a contradiction still,' says Pope; and certainly no angler was ever more at a loss among the slippery and funny tribe than man is among wayward, capricious, and *inconsuante* women. It is next to impossible to know how to take them. That which pleases to-day is an offence to-morrow. Their moods are so variable that no one can be certain of them for two hours together. *Exigéante* and capricious, the disproportion of their demands is only to be equalled by the unaccountable fitfulness with which they change; and any one who has burnt his fingers in the vain endeavour to meet and satisfy their wishes, soon learns, in the painful process, to wait with calm indifference for the passing away of their ever-varying moods.

There are women who have a marvellous faculty for skimming rapidly over the surface of things, reminding one of the swallow as he sometimes skims over the water in search of food, dipping here and there in his rapid flight. It is as breathless and fatiguing to follow them in their conversation as to pursue a squirrel as he leaps with wonderful agility from tree to tree. No sooner do you imagine that you have caught their meaning, and are going to enjoy a little conversation that can boast of some consecutiveness, than you are obliged, by a powerful wrench or intellectual sleight of hand, which recalls the feats of acrobats and jugglers, to divert your thoughts suddenly into a totally different channel, wholly unconnected with anything that has gone before, till you are led through mazes of which a volatilo woman alone is capable. Overpowered with the exertions of the chase, you give up, simply exhausted by the process, without any clear or distinct idea on any one subject. This exercise is frequently accompanied by a considerable amount of vivacity and *naïveté*, which imparts a raciness to the entertainment, which would otherwise be only unbearable. Shouts of laughter succeed one another as you find yourself

engaged in a kind of steeplechase, or in an intellectual version of the old-fashioned game of 'hunt the slipper,' only with this difference, that the slipper is rarely the same for two minutes together. Or it may be that the transitions are too rapid for the completion of any sentence calculated to explain the idea which, for the moment, has possession of the mind; and while you strain every faculty you have in order to gain some insight into the meaning of what is said, you are abruptly asked, in the middle of half-uttered, half-expressed, incoherent and broken sentences, whether you do not understand. If it were not for the arch good-humour with which the question is put, you would feel disposed to resent such an off-handed way of disposing of conversation. And, after all, what is it you are supposed to understand? ideas not expressed; thoughts not shaped into words. Fairly puzzled, yet unwilling to own your defeat, or too courteous to insinuate the utter incomprehensibleness of your fair friend, you either try to catch at some meaning as well as you can, or content yourself with giving a vague kind of answer that may mean anything or nothing, or endeavour to shelve the whole matter by an affirmative which, if not strictly in accordance with the truth, seems the only loophole of escape. This game is played again and again with equal *naïveté*, and the most abstruse questions are touched upon in the same reckless and superficial manner, for no subject is either too grave or too deep for them. No sphynx ever uttered darker sayings or propounded more perplexing riddles.

There are certain privileges which women claim for themselves, and to which no man would dispute their right; but there are others which we should not be so willing to accord to them. For instance, women may change their minds or express dissatisfaction at their pleasure. They would, no doubt, resent its being treated as complaint or discontent, but how they would designate the peculiar disposition of mind to which we refer it is not for us to

say. In the absence of any other name, we can only speak of what it resembles, and describe it as it is to be found. Everything is out of tune; nothing is right. The gown does not fit; is not the right colour, nor the right cut; is not suited to the weather or the season; it is either too hot or too cold, too thick or too thin, too heavy or too light. The bonnet is equally at fault. The carriage should be open when it is closed, and *vice versa*. The dinner is not right; the meat not tender; the hour is wrong; the 'service' indifferent; the company not well assorted. If they go to one theatre, they instantly discover they ought to have gone to another. If they visit Lady —, or Mrs. —, they are envious of the furniture and decorations. They continually complain of what they have, and covet what they have not got. It is true that the complaint generally refers to the more superficial circumstances of daily life; but if an effort is made to remove the cause of offence, or to supply what is wanting, then that is, in its turn, converted into a grievance, and men are railed against for being so 'stupid' and 'narrow-minded' as to take them at their word. They consider it a hardship that they are not allowed to grumble *ad libitum*, and are, or pretend to be, provoked that any should be so dull and matter-of-fact as to take them *au pied de la lettre*, and endeavour to provide a remedy against that which, after all, proves to be their pastime. It is very difficult to imagine it possible that there should be any *lucce* in grumbling: yet so it is. There are women to whom it is as much a part of their life as it is to eat and drink. Yet as it is said that two things are essential to the happiness of every Englishman—a grievance, and some one to tell it to—why should we be astonished at the fact that there are women who love a good grumble and find a pleasure in crying for the moon?

We have all been introduced to the 'Naggletons,' and might, without any very great difficulty, find the exact counterpart of Mrs. Naggleton among our friends and ac-

quaintances. She is by no means a *rara avis*. 'Knagging' is a most expressive word. Its very sound denotes that roughness of temper which is continually fretting against people and things. Some women have a peculiar talent for ceaseless captiousness, which it is their delight to exercise every day and hour with unabated vigour, keeping it free from rust. They do not waste their strength and time in violent outbursts of vituperation, but by means of incessant reproaches and twittings keep their victims in a state of perpetual discomfort. Water will wear a stone by its continual dropping; and these women know how to wear out the peace of a man's life by their unremitting 'knagging.' It is a process of slow torture, not unlike the tactics of a cat towards a mouse, or of a spider towards a fly. Women who have this peculiar gift generally select as their victims those of an easy temper who are not conspicuous for any strength of character, but who possess a certain fund of *bonhomie*. They find them best suited to their purpose, and well disposed to submit to the inevitable for the sake of a quiet home. In addition to her other powers, Mrs. Naggleton has the faculty of always making herself appear as the martyr. While she tortures her victim she assumes the air of injured innocence, and tries to persuade others, as successfully as she persuades herself, that she is herself the victim of an inconstant, neglectful, or inconsiderate husband; and, with wonderful self-command, she goads him to say or do something which shall put her in the right. With great cleverness she baits her bull, and at the same time gets out of him opportunities for further sport. Having also the 'gift of tears,' she calls them in to her aid, when other measures fail, and the old tactics seem to have lost their power, and is content to gain her point even at the cost of a little apparent weakness; for she knows that few men can withstand 'the unanswerable tear in woman's eye.'

The love of cruelty is inherent in human nature, and women are no

exception to the rule. It is certainly the most hateful aspect under which they can present themselves before us; and the idea itself is so entirely contradictory to all that distinguishes a woman from the rest of the creation, that it seems almost paradoxical to say that she can be cruel. Yet it is not so by any means. History can supply us with too many instances in which women have been conspicuous for their cruelty, and the annals of crime record against them some of the most revolting murders and crimes. The form of cruelty to which we refer is generally combined with a certain cleverness which belongs to women who have the reputation for being *intrigantes*. It is, of course, combined also with unscrupulousness; because no one can be both cruel and considerate towards others. If an unkind thing can be done or said, they say it and do it not only without hesitation or compunction, but even with satisfaction. They take pleasure in playing upon a raw, in chafing a wounded spirit, in goading almost to madness a mind that is, perhaps, already heavily laden. With wonderful discrimination and quickness of perception they can discover the weak point where an assault can be made with success, and they direct their efforts to it. Where their own schemes and designs are immediately or indirectly concerned, they are not likely to show pity; but apart from this they take actual pleasure in wounding, and in watching the effects of their cruelty. It is their amusement and their sport. No tie of relationship, however close and intimate, is any protection from their lash. 'Their tongues are sharp swords, and the poison of asps is under their lips.' If, by any chance, a young wife, whose experience of life is but short, comes across her path, the cruel woman will amuse herself at her expense. She will sow the seeds of suspicion and distrust; will open the eyes of her unsuspecting victim to any imperfections in her husband's character; will suggest the thought that he has concealments from her. If she has known him in his bachelor

days she will pretend to a more intimate acquaintance with his opinions, feelings, and habits; will refer, with an air of mystery, to some circumstance or event of his past life which, without any evil intention, he may not have disclosed to his wife, and will feign astonishment when, in reply to her repeated and off-hand assurance that 'of course her husband had told her all this long ago,' she sees nothing but the blank look of ignorance, and will affect surprise that the past is such a sealed book to the young wife, who sits quivering under the torturing process. Or, in the very wantonness of her love of mischief she will assume that, be it as it may with regard to the past, there must be perfect unanimity in all that relates to the present; and making the most of such knowledge as she can acquire, will convey the impression that she possesses the confidence which belongs to the wife, even while she assumes, in the very exquisiteness of her cruelty, that that confidence has not been withheld from her to whom it is due: or, varying her mode of attack, will comment upon the dress or equipage, assuming that it has been directed and provided by the care and forethought of an attentive and devoted husband, while she knows that these are not matters which occupy his thoughts in any degree. The cruel woman knows well how to take the brightness out of everything, and how to say the most cruel, cutting things in the blindest possible tones. If her cleverness secures for her a favourable reception in society, the withdrawal of her presence always occasions a sense of relief, though she never fails to leave a sting behind. Just as the presence of a hawk causes a commotion among the small birds, she creates a sensation wherever she goes. Her dearest friends are not safe, for she will not scruple to sacrifice their comfort and happiness to her love of cruelty, and she hails the sight of tears as a tribute to her power. Such women are essentially birds of prey, and though such examples are rare they are not altogether unknown.

From the extreme susceptibility and nervous organization of women, there is a considerable tendency to excitement and versatility, which conduces to impatience of the minor circumstances of life. There can be no doubt that the smaller contradictions of daily life are, in a certain sense, harder to bear than many of its severer trials. Against the former we are not specially prepared or on our guard; against the latter we are. Against the one we set all the fortitude of which we are capable, but of the others we take little heed. We are disposed to let them take their chance, and in this dangerous security lies the secret of their strength and our weakness. As a rule, the lives of women are more affected by externals. Their occupations and interests are of the lighter kind, and hence the small events of everyday life are a greater fret to them; they both feel them more keenly and are more influenced by them. This is not said disparagingly, but only to account, in some degree, for the peculiar susceptibility and impatience which women frequently exhibit. The variations of weather produce corresponding changes in our natures. A dark day infects the mind with its gloom, and the nervous system acts like a barometer under the varying influence of the temperature. Therefore it is not astonishing that the thwartings of daily life should have the effect of exciting impatience in natures which are so finely constituted. As the faintest breeze can awaken the notes of an *Æolian* harp, so the slightest ripple in the circumstances of life can call into existence those feelings which are especially under the influence of the nerves. The nervous, impatient woman is a torment to herself as well as to others. She demands the utmost promptitude in the execution of her wishes. No one is quick enough, and yet all are too quick. Her *juste milieu* is unattainable. Though it is impossible, without a spirit of divination, always to forestall another's wants, yet the irritable woman is in a frenzy if her requirements are not speedily met. Servants, children, friends, all are

in fault, and she is always complaining why her chariot-wheels seem to tarry. Life is frenzied; energies are wasted on trifles, and the most intense vehemence of words and manner accompanies the most trivial acts. Repose and quiet find no place with her. The spirit of impatience has troubled the waters which the angel of peace is never invited to quell.

Love is the domain which specially belongs to woman, over which she rules with undisputed sway. It is her peculiar privilege and province to awaken it, as well as to lavish and bestow it. Yet there is a temper and disposition, which might almost be called a vice, that springs from love and keeps close by its side. If pity is akin to love, jealousy is its offspring, turning 'love divine to joyless dread,' just as ashes are produced by fire. It is affirmed by some that there can be no true love without jealousy. This is true in a certain sense. It would be impossible to love another and to be at the same time indifferent to his or her infidelity or neglect; but it is not true in the sense in which it is often urged as the plea for absurd and groundless jealousies. It often happens that the most trivial and innocent incidents are distorted into misdemeanours and offences against the law of love by those who are always on the look-out for grounds of jealousy; and the commonest courtesies of life are misconstrued and suspected of evil, till society itself is viewed as one vast conspiracy against their happiness. It causes great and needless suffering, and not unfrequently brings about the very evil which is so much dreaded.

Women who talk and women who love to manage are among those who have brought discredit upon womankind. These are they who

never can undertake the smallest thing without a considerable amount of talk. Everything must be discussed over and over again, not for the sake of prudence, that all sides and aspects of the same subject may be duly considered, but for the mere love of talking; and thus the boundaries of truth and falsehood are not always as carefully preserved as they might be. Mistakes are made; exaggeration obscures the truth; no watch is set on the lips, and words are used more with reference to the entertainment they are meant to afford than to truth.

The managing woman always occupies herself in setting her neighbour's house in order. She is up to any emergency, is ever ready with a suggestion and a plan, and equally ready to take offence if her advice is not followed. She criticises, discusses, proposes, and advises. She is the bane of young newly-married people, who, diffident of their own powers and resources, are too ready to take the managing woman at her own value and listen to her counsels.

The ways of womankind are manifold, and if some of their peculiarities are less pleasing than others, or are fraught with danger to our peace and happiness, it cannot be denied that in nine cases out of ten they are our light and solace. Almost all we know of virtue and religion we have learned from woman. Our greatest happiness has come from her. 'Without her the two extremities of this life would be destitute of succour, and the middle be devoid of pleasure.'

'A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrow's simple wiles
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort and command
And yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light.'



ETIQUETTES OF GRIEF.

THERE is nothing in which peculiarities and differences of character show themselves more strikingly than in the variety of ways in which people take their griefs. By griefs, we mean those sorrows which are the result of some bereavement. There is no one whose heart is so dead to all regard for others, or so absorbed by self-love, that there is not some one object the loss of which would plunge him into the most profound grief. Every one has his tender side, as well as his weak point. Some possess a greater number of interests than others, but every one has something, a husband, a wife, a child, or a friend which occupies his thoughts and care, the presence or loss of which makes life a pleasure or a blank. It is quite true that 'the heart knoweth its own bitterness,' and that no one can properly estimate the trials of his neighbour, or calculate beforehand how any one will conduct himself under affliction. You cannot argue upon it, nor safely draw any inferences on the subject. It is one of the mysteries of the human heart which no one can solve, and, being so, it is as unfair as it is narrow-minded to say that this or that person does not feel so strongly as another because his conduct or expression does not tally with certain laws or rules which we may have chosen to lay down on the matter. It is quite possible to argue both ways on a subject of this kind; but it is not safe to pronounce upon any one as really deficient in feeling because he does not act according to our notions of the way in which we believe that we should ourselves act under similar circumstances. We are not lawgivers, and have no right to lay down rules for others in such matters, especially as they are beyond the reach of any law.

A great grief often changes the character so wonderfully that we are not able to recognize it again. Like a veil, it hides from our sight the expression with which we have grown familiar and are wont to look for; or, like blindness,

it takes the light out of the eyes that used to shine brightly upon us. We have known instances of persons who were the gayest of the gay, on whom the ordinary trials of life could make no impression; who have seemed to live in the present, and to be the life of the circle in which they moved; who had no care, no thought for the morrow; apparently without any special interests, because the whole world was to them as an instrument of sweet music, which was always ready to respond to their slightest touch, and about whom it would have been difficult to predicate what would or would not touch them. We have known such struck down by an overwhelming grief. Death laid his hand on some treasure which they scarcely knew how much they prized, and of which they always felt secure, because it was always there; the reaper came and carried off the flower they loved, and in a moment the heart was frozen, ice-bound with grief. The sunshine had gone out of their lives, and had left them to grope their way in the darkness. From that moment they were changed, transformed almost beyond the power of recognition.

Others, again, have lived for years in the selfish enjoyment of the blessings which surrounded them, have culpably neglected those who have been the chief ministers to their comfort, treating them with selfish indifference, and showing but little, if any, regard for their happiness; and when death has deprived them of the companionship of one whose unselfish, unwearied, and patient love chiefly conduced to their comfort, they have bewailed their loss in ceaseless tears, and have exhibited the most overwhelming sense of their bereavement, and have quite taken the world by surprise at their poignant grief, betokening an affection for which no one gave them credit. There have been men of great reserve who feel acutely, but the outward signs of whose joys and sorrows do not lie on the surface. No one supposes

them to be capable of any great sensibility, and yet they suffer acutely; grief gnaws into their hearts; they go on their way silently but deeply mourning over the graves of their dead. Even they who have been exceedingly demonstrative in their affection towards a beloved object will sometimes occasion the greatest surprise to their friends by the manner in which they behave under affliction. They will speak almost lightly of the dead; will comment upon the last moments; repeat over again and again the last words; describe the last looks; and even discuss the appearance of the body as it lies shrouded in its coffin. They will speak of themselves as 'crushed,' 'annihilated,' and 'desolate' in tones and accents inconsistent with such language. They will take the greatest personal interest in the arrangements for the funeral; will act as a kind of master of the ceremonies, or chief undertaker; or will be strict in their inquiry how everything went off; and will demand the most exact and detailed account of the proceedings of the day, and the remarks that were made; and will take an evident pride in the respect that may have been paid to the memory of the deceased.

Others, again, who have seemed to live only in the presence of some beloved one, will shrink from the very mention of the name; will never suffer it to be uttered in their presence, much less ever allow it to escape their own lips. It is almost as if some disgrace were attached to it, as if something of dishonour and shame were associated with it. It is folded up in the past, never to be unfolded again; or erased, as if a sponge had been taken to blot out the name for ever. And yet it is not really forgotten. The beloved name is enshrined in the heart, treasured up there like withered flowers within the leaves of some precious book, or like the relics which the devout pilgrim honours. There are they also whose love is beyond all dispute, who take an entirely opposite line, and can talk of nothing else. It is the unvarying theme of their conversation and their letters. If any attempt is

made to divert the thought into some other channel bearing more upon daily life and the blessings that remain, they ingeniously manage to make them drift back again to the subject of their sorrow. Every scrap of writing is produced, to be read again and again; every incident is narrated till sympathy is almost worn threadbare, and the over-indulged grief becomes a monomania. We are strangely-constituted beings, often, in extremes, moved in various ways by our passions and affections. It is quite intelligible that a violent shock should, for a time, almost unhinge the mind, and drive it into eccentricities; and it is, therefore, the more unfair to judge and condemn harshly any form which sorrow may take that is not altogether in unison with received customs. We cannot grieve by rule and measure. Small griefs are loud, but great ones still.

* Angry heart is grieve loud awhile
Broken hearts are dumb and smile.*

Laughter comes not from profound joy, nor weeping from deep sorrow. It is true that tears and sorrow are frequent companions, but rarely in their highest excesses, and therefore there is nothing more fallacious than the outward signs of sorrow. The chances are, that the affliction which shrinks from publicity, seeks to be invisible, and avoids ceremony; is more true and deep than that which finds its solace in that outward display which invites the comment of the world at large.

It always appeared to us as peculiarly hard that our gracious Queen was at one time censured for indulging her sorrow. If any one had greater cause than another to mourn, it was she. Placed by Providence in an exalted and trying position, she needed all the support and aid that an intelligent mind and a faithful, loyal, and loving heart could afford. No sorrow, care, or anxiety had hitherto entered her home, which was the very type of domestic felicity. Suddenly the greatest of all possible trials befell her, at a time when the age of her children made a father's hand and counsel all the

more necessary; and who could blame her that she did not mourn by rule? that she still reveres and honours the memory of one for whom the whole nation wept? There have been others in humbler rank, no doubt, equally sorely tried, who have mourned all the days of their life, and who can never bring themselves to discard the symbols of their desolation, or to return to the world as if it still possessed any charms for them. They prefer the quiet of their own home circle, and no one questions their right to indulge their preference; but then it must be acknowledged that society has no direct and positive claim upon them. It is one of the penalties of the most exalted rank, that they who occupy it must, to a certain extent, put a restraint upon their natural desire for privacy. In her gradual approach to her former life, let us deal gently and lovingly with our Queen, as a child would towards a parent, that she may know that we understand and can appreciate the great sacrifice she is making of herself for the public good, and that we are fully sensible that human nature is the same in all—that the stricken heart of both rich and poor alike need repose and time to recover itself.

There is, however, one aspect of this subject—the expression of grief—with which we confess to have very little patience. We allude to certain etiquettes which, in many instances, are followed to an absurd extent. There are some persons in the world who cannot exist without satisfying themselves that all they do is *en règle*. We have known instances in which when the death of a relation has been announced, for whom the survivors had no feeling but that of dislike, that they think it necessary to shut themselves up in their rooms, as if they were overwhelmed with affliction. They go through the farce of pretending to a sorrow which all the world knows they do not feel. Heirs who never cared for those from whom they inherit, think it necessary to go through certain formalities. A brother, who has supplanted us in our birthright, or in the affections

of some one on whom we were dependent, and who has plotted against us to his own advantage and our injury; a child, whose disobedience and want of affection has been the trial and torment of our lives; a mother, who has forsaken or neglected her children; and a wife, who has been the bane of her home, cannot cause the same sorrow and regret as those whose faithfulness, tender care, dutifulness, unselfishness, and uprightness have endeared them to all who have been associated with them. And yet no distinction is made; the same etiquettes are observed, the same retirement from the world, the same expressions, the same language is adopted in both instances. We do not, of course, refer to the custom of wearing mourning, which is a rule which cannot be dispensed with; and, so far, etiquette may serve us in good stead, when it prevents our proclaiming too plainly to the world the estimation in which we have held our deceased relatives and friends. It is said that 'blood is thicker and water,' that ties of relationship bind more strongly than other ties. It may be so where the mutual obligations of relationship are cheerfully fulfilled, but certainly not where those obligations have been neglected, set at nought, and contradicted through life.

*To be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain;*

and ties of relationship are worse than without force, when all the affection, kindness, and consideration which they are supposed to represent, are not only wanting but reversed.

Two rather absurd and amusing instances occur to us connected with the subject of etiquettes of grief. One was that of a parish clerk, who was called upon to take part in the funeral obsequies of one of our country magnates. The clergyman, having been somewhat disconcerted by the apparent backwardness of the clerk to make the responses which, when he did make them, were not in his usual tone and manner, but rather as if he were suffering from a severe cold, in-

quired, after the service was over, whether he was ill. The clerk both looked and expressed astonishment at being so interrogated. The clergyman explained, and added that he was afraid he was suffering from a severe cold. The clerk instantly drew down the corners of his mouth, and said, in the same snuffing, lachrymose tone, that he was not ill, but that he thought it his duty to appear affected. The other was that of a lady who had recently become a widow. She had not been conspicuous for fidelity or conjugal affection, and, when she saw some of her husband's relatives for the first time after his death, and observed, or thought she observed them scanning, with looks of disapprobation, her uncovered head, forestalled all remonstrance by saying, with a sigh, that 'dear Tom' had made her promise she would not disfigure herself by wearing that hideous head-dress called a widow's cap; 'dear Tom,' she well knew, was not a man to know or trouble himself about any woman's dress when he was alive, and it was not likely that his rest would be disturbed by the thought that his lovely widow might be disfiguring herself by wearing the sign of her widowhood.

It continually happens, during a London season, that a whole family is shut out from society by the death of a relative for whom they never cared, and whom some of them never beheld. The rule of etiquette has enacted that no one shall mix in society till after a certain time has elapsed after the death of a relative, and a kind of graduated scale has been fixed, varying according to the degrees of relationship. Any infringement of this rule is severely commented upon, and the transgressors are denounced as unfeeling, indecent, heartless, and many other things besides. A mother who has several daughters to dispose of—or perhaps it may be only one, but that one on the apparent verge of a proposal from a most eligible *parti*—is sometimes suddenly shut out from society by an etiquette which demands of her a retirement from the world for a

season, on account of the death of a relation for whom none of them ever cared, or had any reason to regret, and she has perhaps to bear, in addition, the uncertainty whether the anxiously-expected marriage will ever 'come off,' the course of true love having been interrupted at a critical moment. Instances might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, exposing both the inconveniences and absurdities which result from a compliance with the rigorous laws of etiquette. There are people who think it indecorous, at such times, to meet the different members of their family at dinner, but manage to get over their grief at tea-time, and have little *côteries* in their bedroom or sitting-room; or who think it honouring the dead to darken one of their windows for a twelvemonth with a huge unsightly hatchment; and who consider mutes, and an assemblage of mourning coaches and private carriages, indispensable appendages of grief. The custom of people sending their private carriages closed, as their representatives, to follow in the train of a funeral procession, is certainly one of the strangest imaginable. In fact, all funerals in this country have a somewhat pagan aspect, owing to the power of etiquette, which has prescribed what shall or shall not be done, and which scarcely any one dares to resist. When the heart is bowed down with grief, and silently pleads to be let alone, the undertaker has it all his own way, and hatbands and scarfs of silk and crape swell the amount of his bill, and help to make the solemn ceremony a profit to himself. The clerk gets another breadth for his wife's Sunday gown, and the clergyman's wife or daughter a new silk apron.

The tradesman complies with etiquette and puts up a shutter in honour of a deceased patron, which also serves as an advertisement to the living, and conciliates the survivors. After the lapse of a certain time, during which the relatives mourn, or are supposed to mourn in private and retirement, cards of thanks for kind inquiries are sent out, which are meant to express

that the mourners are well disposed to other society than their own. In short, from first to last, etiquette has prescribed, with a surprising definiteness, all the minutiae of the symbols and expressions of grief; so much so that an amusing anecdote has been told, perhaps more *ben trovato* than true, of a lady who went to one of the great mourning warehouses in London, and, on mentioning what she required, was politely requested by one of the shopmen to go further on. 'This, madam, is the light affliction department; the heavy bereavement is further on.'

The result of all this system of etiquette is, that, while invidiousness may be avoided, there is a considerable amount of unreality underlying the whole question. A combination of friend and relation is of infinite value; a blessing to be prized, and to be bewailed when

lost; but it is possible to have a friend whose love, like Jonathan's for David, surpassed the love of women; or a daughter-in-law like Ruth, whose love and loyalty prompted her to say to her mother-in-law, 'Where thou goest I will go; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.'

No outward expressions of grief can ever sufficiently represent the sorrow which their loss must occasion those who are called upon to bear it, and who are properly sensible of it. It is when a deep and overwhelming sorrow comes upon us, that all minor considerations are lost sight of. The heart that is really stricken has neither inclination nor time to dwell upon the host of little things which occupy those whose griefs are only skin-deep.

THE WHITE FEATHER.



'READY, Helen?' asked peremptorily, *more suo*, Gertie Fairfax, appearing, parasol-whip in hand, at one of the open windows of the long drawing-room at Laureston one afternoon, the last of a certain August. 'Ready, Helen?'

A fair-haired girl, buried in a low, soft chair, day-dreaming, with her pretty gloved hands ly-

ing in her lap, answered lazily, 'Yes, dear,' and rose, not too willingly.

'Then come along,' said Gertie; 'Damon and Pythias are wild to start, and the dog-cart went for Dar half an hour ago. We shall be too late for the train, after all. Come along, dear!'

And, thus adjured, Helen Troherne followed her cousin out of the cool, pleasant room on to the hot asphalt of the terrace, and eventually into the perfect little pony-chaise it was Gertie's pride to call her own.

'That'll do, Drake,' Miss Fairfax said, presently, when the white dust-wrapper had been settled over her own skirt and her companion's; 'that'll do; let them go!'

And Drake (a tiny Elzevir groom, known to his mistress's intimates as 'the Childe') obeying, the impatient ponies flung themselves with a jerk into their collars, and started off at a hand-gallop down the avenue almost before 'the Childe' could swing himself into his perch behind. 'They're awfully fresh, Nell!' said their delighted mistress, as soberly as she could, while the Jouvin's sixes on her firm little hands, that controlled so skilfully the vagaries of those wilful pets, were sorely strained and tried in the endeavour to keep the said pets straight now as they rushed past the lodge;

'they're awfully fresh! It's lucky they knew we were coming, and kept the gates open, isn't it? I think we shall get to Baddingley before Dar, after all. Gently, Damon! Quiet, sir!' as the off thoroughbred tried to break into a canter again on the smooth high road, and the congenial Pythias, on the near side, seemed quite ready to follow his example. 'There! that's beautiful! Aren't they darlings, Helen?'

'Dears!' assented Miss Treherne; 'but just a little too much for you at times, I think, Gertie.'

'Nonsense! they've never got out of my hand once since Dar gave them to me. Why, he chose them for me himself, on purpose for my own driving, or mamma would never trust me with only "the Childe," who is only ornamental, you know. I say, Nell, I'm so glad Dar is coming. This is the last we shall see of him. His leave's up in December, and the regiment isn't to come home for goodness knows how long.'

'Will Dar go back to India, then?' Miss Treherne asked.

'I'm afraid so!' Gertie sighed. 'I wish he wouldn't. So does mamma. She wants him to marry and settle down with us at Laureston.'

'And Dar declines?'

'So it appears. He always laughs in that provoking way of his at the notion of his ever being seriously *épris*, you know; says he should tire of any woman in a week, and that sort of thing. The fact is,' Gertie added, after a pause, 'in his quiet, "dangerous" way, Mr. Dar is a frightful flirt; and he's been so spoiled that I don't think he is likely to give me a sister-in-law yet awhile. This last season he was *aux petits soins* with Flora Hoddesdon. You know the Hoddesdons—up yonder at The Place. And I fancy Flora liked him. As, indeed,' remarked, *en parenthèse*, the partial sister, 'most women do somehow, when he means they should. And we thought he really did mean something. But Dar went off quietly one morning to Baden, or somewhere, and nothing came of it.

I think mamma would quite approve of Flora; and perhaps now, when they meet—but one never knows what to make of Dar. He takes everything so coolly; though no one can be more winning when he chooses. Vere Brabazon says he's worshipped in the regiment.'

'And who is Vere Brabazon?' inquired Helen.

'Oh! didn't I tell you?' Gertie said, looking straight forward between the off-pony's ears; 'he's a friend of Dar's, in the same regiment. Dar saved his life in India. They came home on leave together, and we met him in London. He follows Dar about everywhere.'

'*Tiens!* will he follow his preserver down here?'

'I'm sure I don't know. I believe mamma asked him. She took rather a fancy to him.'

'And is he a "cool captain," too?'

'No; he's only a sub. And he doesn't like Dar's line at all, though he looks up to him immensely. They call him "Hebe" in the regiment, because he was quite a child when he joined, and has yellow hair and a face that would be like a girl's if it weren't for his moustache and the Indian bronze on it. But he behaved splendidly, Dar says, in that horrible mutiny!' Gertie went on, her pale, delicate little face lighting up as she spoke—'splendidly! and bore all the hardship and suffering as carelessly as the oldest soldier there. And then he was awfully wounded, too, poor fellow! And he would have been killed but for Dar.'

'Altogether, "Hebe" is rather interesting?'

'Well, yes,' Gertie responded, laughing, but with the flush on her cheek still.

'And Dar saved his life! How was that?' Miss Treherne pursued.

'Well, you know,' Gertie answered, 'neither of them would say much about it. But he, Mr. Brabazon, told me that Dar swam his horse into a river under a heavy fire, and helped him to the bank, when he had been hit, and was just falling from his saddle. He says nothing but Dar's pluck and coolness saved

them both, and that Dar ought to have the V. C. He's very quiet and gentle, and at first I thought almost ladylike in his manner. I suppose he hasn't got strong again yet; but he grew quite excited and eloquent when he talked about "the Don's" (they call Dar "the Don," you know) good-nature in coming in after him. "I thought it was all up with me, Miss Fairfax," he said to me; "I was getting dizzy and confused, for I'd been rather badly hit, and couldn't head old Mustapha, my charger, for the bank, as I ought to have done, and we began going down stream, while the niggers were taking pot-shots at us quite comfortably from their cover. I felt I should roll out of my saddle in another minute, when I heard 'the Don's' voice close beside me, and then I knew it would be all right. He brought Mustapha and me out of it, and never got touched himself, though the Pandies blazed away harder than ever all the time, and he was covering me. It was the noblest thing that ever was done, by Jove! it was."

'So it was!' Miss Treherne said, with a light in her own violet eye, when Gertie had finished her extract from 'Hebe's' narrative; 'and you quote Mr. Brabazon admirably, dear!' she added.

'Absurd!' the other laughed, administering rather uncalled-for punishment to Damon for breaking the trot. And neither spoke again till they were driving through the High Street at Baddingley.

The cousins were more like sisters than some sisters are I wot of. The same age to a day, they had been nearly always together since they left their Paris pension, and never separated for so long a time before as they had done this year, when Gertie Fairfax had been up to London for her presentation, and had been entered to run the gauntlet of her first season.

Helen Treherne's father, the dean, a courtly, clerical grand seigneur, who grew every year more loth to leave the dignified ease and repose of the Cathedral Close, and to miss his darling's fair face and brightening presence from his side for very

long, had put off that ordeal in her case till another year.

Even as it was, when she came back to Laureston, Gertie had to take dean and deanery by storm, and fight a hardish battle, before she could carry off his sunshine (as the old man loved to call his daughter) for a brief visit. But Miss Fairfax had a knack of getting her own way in most things, and the dean had to yield, and did.

While the ponies were trotting up the sharp rise which leads to Baddingley Station, the express, five miles off, was rushing full swing down the line bound for the same goal.

Fast as they were going, and admirably as they have kept time all the way, one of its passengers, lounging on his cushions over 'Punch' and a regalia, was beginning to wax impatient.

'Deuced slow work this, aint it, "Hebe?"' Daryl Fairfax said at last to his companion, a slight, tall, fair-haired Light Dragoon, with a bronzed face and a yellow moustache, who was sucking away at a facsimile of the other's cabaña. 'We ought to be there by now.'

'Don't know about slow, you know,' Vere Brabazon responded; 'done the last six miles in seven minutes and a quarter by my watch. Whereabouts are we? You ought to know, Dar.'

Daryl Fairfax picked himself up, and looked out of the window.

'All right!' he said; 'there's Baddingley spire. And there's the whistle!' he added, the next moment, as the engine began to shriek on nearing the junction.

'Get yourself together, "Hebe," and hand us over that gun-case. Can't afford to trust that to any one but myself. Here we are!' And creaking, and groaning, and hissing, the express ran into the station.

There was a crowd of people on the platform; but for all the noise and confusion of yelling porters, struggling passengers, gaping, helpless bucolics, and the rest, Vere Brabazon managed to catch a glimpse of a face which had been haunting him all the journey down, and for many a long day before.

'I say, Don,' he said, flinging away his cigar, 'there she is!'

'Is she?' responded Dar, with a rug-strap between his teeth. 'Who?'

'Your sister.'

'Deuce she is!' observed Miss Fairfax's brother. 'Why, I told them to send over the dog-cart for us. At least, you know, I don't think I said anything about your coming, Vere. I suppose she's come to meet me with the ponies. Here, guard!' And that polite official came hurrying up to unlock the door. 'Never mind,' Dar went on, when the two were on the platform, 'we'll make room for you somehow. You shall have "the Childe's" perch behind, if Gertie's here alone. Come along!'

In another moment they had emerged from the ruck, and Miss Fairfax's watchful eyes had lighted on them.

'There they are, Nell!' she said, suddenly. 'There's Dar, with that gun-case in his hand!'

'And "Hebe" bringing up the rear?' whispered Helen; for the pair were close upon them now. 'The soubriquet suits him admirably, Gertie!'

But Gertie had moved off to welcome her brother, dutifully.

'Dear old Dar! I'm so glad you've come!'

'Beau obligé, petite!' the dear Dar vouchsafed to answer; 'but I say, I hope you've sent something for us besides your phaeton. I've brought Vere down with me.'

'Oh, indeed,' Gertie said, becoming suddenly aware of the existence of such an individual. 'How do you do, Mr. Brabazon?'

Mr. Brabazon, who had been standing silently by, pulling his yellow moustache, and looking (Helen thought) certainly very 'ladylike' and languid, brightened up immediately, and seemed perfectly happy when his fingers closed round the little hand Gertie gave him.

'There's the dog-cart for you, Dar,' his sister said, presently; 'I'm afraid Helen and I and "the Childe" quite fill the phaeton, you know.'

"Helen," Dar said—he had been

wondering for the last thirty seconds who the blonde-haired girl with the white feather in her hat might be—"Helen," not Cousin Helen.'

'Why not?' Cousin Helen asked, with a smile and little blush, as she put out her hand to meet Dar's.

'On the contrary,' that individual responded, in somewhat involved speech; 'on the contrary, every reason why. Except my failing to recognize you, as I ought to have done, at once. It's—how many years—since we saw each other last? There is that excuse for me.'

And they made their way out of the station by degrees—Helen and Dar, followed by Gertie and Vere Brabazon—till they came to where 'the Childe' stood at the ponies' heads, and conversed affably on the chances of the coming 'Cambridgeshire,' with the groom who had brought over the dog-cart.

While the porters were stowing gun-cases and dressing-bags, and other light luggage into its interior, the two men stood one on either side of the phaeton when the girls were seated, talking pleasantly.

Pleasantly, because Vere and Gertie Fairfax were beginning to understand each other; and because 'the Don' was by no means sorry to discover that 'the blonde-haired girl' was Cousin Helen.

Little by little he got to identify her with a pet of his some ten years ago, a plucky little woman of eight, whom he had taught to sit her first pony, and who had wept such passionate tears one night when a big official letter had come to Laureston, and Cornet Fairfax of 'Ours' was ordered to embark for India and active service forthwith.

He remembered, too, how they had drunk a bumper after dinner to his *bon voyage*—how the old Squire, the kind, generous governor he was never to see again, had pledged him with a somewhat shaking voice from the head of the long table in the oak dining-room, and prayed God bless his only son—how Cousin Helen had turned white in her muslin robes, and had slipped from her chair and from the room; and how he had discovered her, half an hour afterwards, in the dark

library alone, sobbing as though her heart would break.

He had called her *La Fée Blanche* in the old time, she was so delicately fair and fragile looking. Watching her face now, as it was lifted to his, and as the child's smile seemed to come again upon the lips, and the old, half-grave, half-laughing look to fill the violet eyes, 'the Don' was, certes, not displeased to discover that time had only ripened that early promise, and that Cousin Helen was very good to look upon, and *La Fée Blanche* still.

So there was a happy ten minutes' talk. For Gertie was at least that time in finding out that her pets were waxing wrath at the delay, and taxing 'the Ohilde's' powers of soothing and intimidation to the uttermost.

As the phaeton drove off at last, Gertie nodding saucily in adieu, and promising to announce their approach to 'my lady' at Laureston, Dar stood watching the white feather in Helen's hat till they had turned the corner, lighting a fresh cigar the while, and thinking how well that velvet toque with its long streamers became her.

'Flora never looked well in a hat,' he thought, aloud and ungratefully, 'and she'd never the sense to discover it. Wonder whether she's down here, and whether she's likely to be troublesome if she is.'

By-and-by he and 'Hebe' were driving towards Laureston in the wake of Gertie's phaeton, which, however, as she had told them, they had small chance of overtaking.

'We'll shoot the home covers tomorrow, Vere, I'm thinking,' Dar said, as they went along; 'I hear uncommonly good reports of them.'

'All right,' murmured 'Hebe,' lazily; 'there won't be so much tramping to do. That floors me utterly, you know.'

'Lazy beggar you are! You mean to shut up by lunch-time. Well, we'll send you back in Gertie's charge if you do. She always drives to meet us with the *viures* when we shoot near home, and lunches with us. So there'll be a field ambulance ready for you if you get put *à terre* de combat.'

'Capital arrangement,' assented Vere, making up his mind to be utterly exhausted by the afternoon; 'morning's always enough for me, you know. I aint so enthusiastic as some fellows about the afternoon birds.'

In point of fact 'Hebe' was a good deal too indolent to care much for any sport that involved long-protracted physical exertion, and detested walking above all things. And he had been rather dreading long days over the stubbles and the turnips after wild coveys without perhaps a glimpse of Gertie Fairfax till dinner-time.

The prospect seemed brighter now after 'the Don's,' his liege lord's, announcement, and Vere pulled away at his eternal *cabaña* with renewed energy.

'Yes,' pursued Dar, still busy with his programme for his opening day, 'that will be a fair morning's work. Shoot up to Thicketon; lunch in the Hoddesdons' wood under the King Oak; meet their keepers there, and keep the outlying fields for the afternoon. That'll do capitally.'

'The Hoddesdons?' 'Hebe' asked. 'Do they live about here?'

'There's their place,' Dar said, jerking his whip towards a tall-chimneyed edifice on a rising ground; 'we've just passed their lodge-gates. You know 'em, don't you?'

'Mademoiselle—tall, dark girl, with good eyes. Yes, I know her.'

'Ah, well, you know all that's necessary if you know Flora. She rules, you know. Ignores Madame Mère altogether, except as a chaperon.'

'By the way, Dar, hadn't you something on with the daughter this season? I heard something about you two.'

'My dear boy; no! Flora and I are very good friends, I believe. That's all. She's not the sort I should ever think seriously about. In fact I never met a woman who was yet. Ours is a very platonic business, and I mean it to remain just that.'

'Tant pis pour elle!' thought 'Hebe.' 'Shouldn't like a platonic friendship, that was never to be any-

thing more, to exist between "the Don" and a sister of mine, if I had one, I know.'

And then he fell to thinking about the state of things between himself and Gertie Fairfax, and to wonder what his own chances were in the little game he felt it would be bitterly hard to give up, or to lose now. His chances!

A younger son, living, he couldn't tell you exactly how, on his younger son's portion of a few hundreds plus pay and allowances, what chance had he of winning a dowered belle like Gertie?

He loved her, poor boy! he couldn't help that, but he doubted often very sorely, in his odd times of reflection, whether he loved wisely.

She might like him to valse with—'Hebe' knew that, despite his indolence, natural and acquired, he could steer a valseuse through an ugly crush, or swing her round a crowded circle as few of the Light Brigade could do—and she mightn't object to have him by her side in her morning canter in the Row, and she might bow and smile pleasantly enough to him when he doffed his hat to her in the Ring. But did she really care for him? Would she listen to him one day? Would his love win her? And even if it did, would her people let her fling herself away upon a penniless sub, with nothing but his sabre to depend on?

Sometimes, when these considerations and doubts presented themselves to him very strongly and disagreeably, poor 'Hebe' was fain to bite his yellow moustache savagely; and, groaning in the spirit, to wish the deuce he hadn't applied for that confounded sick-leave, and almost make up his mind to report himself well at once, and rejoin 'Ours' that winter at Amherabad, N.W.P.; and then find a dozen unanswerable reasons for staying on, and hug his chains the closer, and ask for that extra fast dance, and, perhaps, while the *Cliequot* was hissing and sparkling in his tumbler, persuade himself that he really had some chance of pulling off the race after all. Going to bed,

or to finish the night at the Rag, with the recollection of Gertie's smile and 'good-night' when he had put her into the carriage, haunting him still, and with a happy though hazy notion that 'it would all come right somehow, perhaps.'

But there were times when sophistry of this sort was powerless to soothe him, as now. And so Vere sat behind his big cigar answering such observations as his companion vouchsafed him in languid monosyllables, but sorrowful at heart, and inclined to curse the folly which had made him accept so gratefully Dar's invitation to come down to Laureston for the first, and the greater folly he had committed in coming down to play moth to the dangerous flame that had singed his wings desperately already. And yet *ohime!* and yet!—She had looked adorable when he saw her at the station. She had welcomed him so kindly and so frankly, that surely he would have been an idiot to miss seeing her, and the rest of it.

'Hebe's' cogitations described their wonted circle, and came back to their old starting-point as usual.

By that time they were driving up the avenue at Laureston. As they came out of its shadow they saw the white dresses of the two girls gleaming on the terrace; and, mounting presently the broad, white stone steps that led up from the drive, they were received by 'my lady' in person—an honour seldom accorded by that tall, stately châteline to any but the son she worshipped. She was very gracious to her son's friend too, though.

As Gertie had said, 'my lady' seemed to have taken a great liking for Vere—for Dar's sake, perhaps.

The two girls came up, and they all lingered in the sunlight till the dressing-bell rang.

'Well, Helen, and what do you think of him?' Gertie asked, coming into her cousin's room just as Pincoot had finished coiling the fair hair about her mistress's shapely little head, and had been dismissed. 'What do you think of him now?'

'Think of whom?' Miss Treherne

asked. "Hebe"? I think he's very nice, dear.'

'I don't mean him. Dar. Did you remember him?'

'Perfectly. He hasn't changed much. The bronze, and that big black moustache alter him a little; but I should have recognized Dar's voice and manner anywhere.'

'Yes. They're his own, certainly—Dar's are.'

'Like Mr. Brabazon's. 'Hebe' is immensely ladylike for all his yellow moustache, Gertie,' laughed Helen; 'and he's very pretty too.'

'Well, he can't help being ladylike and pretty, you know,' Gertie responded. 'Poor boy! he is quite a child still; he seemed to have something on his mind to-day, I thought. He was looking quite ill again.'

'Been sitting up too late at the club, and smoking too many cigars, perhaps,' suggested Helen; 'he'll be better after he's been at Lares-ton a day or two, I dare say. Especially if you take him in hand, Gertie.'

'Oh, Helen!'

'J'ai des yeux noir! And they tell me there's nothing the matter with 'Hebe' that you can't cure, darling,—if you choose, that is. Do you mean to choose, Gertie?'

Miss Fairfax smiled, and shook her head.

'It's awfully cool of you to talk like that, Nell,' she said; 'I've never told you—'

'What need was there to tell me, after what I saw just now, when you spoke to him?'

'And what did you see, pray?'

Miss Treherne's answer was nothing more intelligible than a kiss. But it seemed sufficient, for Gertie asked no more questions, and the two went down to the drawing-room together.

There was there before them, lounging over the piano alone, and twisting about the leaves of a pile of music upon it.

When Dar arrived presently, Helen was playing a valse, apparently for her own and sole delectation, for the other two were at a distant window; Gertie seated on cushions in the sill thereof, and

'Hebe' outside on the terrace, talking low-toned talk to her—about the sunset, probably.

'So the "Amaranthe" is a pet valse of yours, too, Helen?' Dar said, crossing at once to the piano.

'How do you know?' she asked, without stopping.

'Easily: you play it, as people ought only to be allowed to play that valse, perfectly.'

'Ergo, it is my pet?'

'Ergo, you understand it, and like it—or you wouldn't be playing it to yourself. And as very few of your sex are content with merely "liking" a thing, but almost invariably end by "loving" it, I may fairly conclude you love the "Amaranthe" best. So do I.'

'I don't know whether your conclusion's a fair one or not,' Helen said, finishing with a rush; 'it happens to be a true one in this case, though.'

And then she fell into that 'loving and liking' snare he had set for her; and Dar amused himself very well till dinner.

During which he, seated beside her, talked about the old days when she was La Fée Blanche, in white frocks and blue ribands; and he 'Cousin Dar,' home for the Eton holidays.

Grown harder and more self-contained now, as was but natural; but, in her eyes, but little altered, Miss Treherne thought, as he opened the door for their retreat back to the drawing-room, by-and-by, on 'my lady' making the move. Not quite so much of a demigod, either, as he had been once in her childish eyes; but, all the same, a strong, straight, stalwart, soldier cousin; none the worse to look upon because his dark face was bronzed and set, and the silky down on his upper lip had become a heavy black moustache, falling over it like a wave.

Altogether, she liked the present 'Cousin Dar' at least as well as the former, she confessed to herself.

And then she remembered his dictum anent feminine 'liking' again; and felt rather inclined to be angry with herself for remembering it.

It was a pleasant evening at

Laureston, that of 'the Don's' arrival. 'My lady' took her coffee in her peculiar chair, in a certain recess in the Long Drawing-room; and Dar made her happy by sitting on the footstool at her feet, and talking to her as she best loved to hear him talk; while Gertie and Helen sang half-a-dozen duets, and Vere Brabazon was on duty at the piano.

Then they strolled on to the terrace in the moonlight, 'my lady' watching them from her sheltered nook. And 'Hebe' seemed to find something inspiring in the poetry of the scene—it was, in fact, the post-prandial Burgundy which had revived his hopes and quieted his fears and misgivings—and had a good deal to say to his companion, which, doubtless, she seriously inclined to hear.

Helen found a garden-chair a little in the shadow, and sat there with the moonlight falling on her fair hair till it looked a halo about her head, leaning her arm on the broad stone balustrade.

The odour of an Havannah, and Cousin Dar's step behind her, made her look round.

'I'm going to shock your imaginative tendencies by smoking a cigar out here,' Dar's voice said. 'The Madre wanted me to send you in; she says the terrace is too cold for you to-night; but I promised you should run no risk, if you liked the moonlight better than the lamp-light; and so I've brought you this.'

He held out a warm violet-and-black striped maud as he spoke—a wrapper precious in the eyes of the *frilleux* East Indian, ever cynically distrustful of the vagaries of an English climate.

'For me?' Helen said: 'but I don't want it, thank you.'

'Grateful!'

'I mean—it's very kind of you to bring it; but I'm not cold.'

'The Madre seems to think you ought to be, anyhow; you'd better let me put it round you.'

Which he did, skilfully. Then he stood beside her, leaning against the stonework of the balustrade too, and smoked on in silence.

'What a lovely night!' Helen said, presently.

'Lovely!' 'the Don' assented, thinking how well her face, with the soft sheen upon it, came out against the dark folds of the plaid draped above her shoulders; 'Laureston always looks its best by moonlight.'

'So I think.'

'Like Melrose, you know; and, for the matter of that, like most other places to the poetic eye. That happens to be a feature I don't possess; but this light does suit all this stonework. I remember thinking that night, ten years ago—just such a night as this, it was—when I was turning my back on it to join 'Ours' in India, that I had never seen the old place look so well. The notion that I might never see it again had something to do with my admiration, I dare say; but I recollect distinctly noticing the effect, and admiring it.'

'And while you were coolly admiring the effect, we were all sobbing in chorus in there, in the drawing-room!'

'You mean I ought to have been doing the same out here? Do you give us your tears, then, only *à charge de revanche*!'

'Grateful!' she said, in his own tone.

'Not so ungrateful as you fancy. Few men are. If we want examples of that worldly virtue, we look to you for them generally, you know.'

'Why? To excuse ingratitude in your own sex; or to prove it?—which?'

'Neither: though you don't put it badly. To learn it, in our turn.'

'*La grande besogne!*' she said, provoked, and shrugging her shoulders after a way she had. Dar smiled.

'You've disarranged the maud,' he said; 'let me fold it again for you. There. As I was saying, we are not so ungrateful as you think us. I am not, anyhow. I haven't forgotten a certain *Fée Blanche* who used to inhabit Laureston once; and whom I saw the night I went away, the last time I turned my head, standing just about here, waving a little handkerchief in adieu to Cousin Dar. I've always felt grate-

ful to that Fée in my heart. Do they call you Fée Blanche still, Helen?"

"Of course not!" she said, laughing, while the colour came into her face.

"Of course not," he repeated, gravely; "who would dare talk in that way to a demoiselle of nineteen with a turn for satirical French?"

"Only 'Cousin Dar,' I suppose."

"I hope so, Fée," he said, then; "I shouldn't like to hear any one take my name for you in vain, I think."

Miss Treherne didn't choose to ask him why; and so after that they were silent—she looking out over the terrace-garden and the park, on to the far-away woods shimmering in the moonlight; and he standing beside her with folded arms, his eyes resting often on her face.

I think one of these two, at all events, was sorry when 'Hebe' and Gertie came up, and formed a quartette, which lingered talking and laughing so long that 'my lady' had to summon them all back to the drawing-room.

"Will you sing me the 'Addio,' Fée?" Dar's low voice whispered in Helen's ear, as they came in last through the open window; 'it's just the night to listen to Schubert. The Madre will order you off directly. Come to the piano now!'

Now the 'Addio' was Miss Treherne's song of songs, and had never been sung by her for other delight than her own; so she asked—

"And pray how did you know that the 'Addio' was a song of mine?"

"I found it before dinner under a pile of Gertie's trash. I'd a sort of certainty that it belonged to you, and that you made it caviare to the general. Right, am I not?"

"Yes," Helen said; "but then——"

"Why do I ask you for it, you mean? Because it is caviare to the general. I don't want what you give to everybody. You'll sing it me—won't you, Fée? Let me sit here; this chair's just the right distance; and you won't want me to turn over leaves for you, I know."

And 'the Don' established himself in a low chair near the piano; and Helen Treherne broke her rule, and did as she was told, and sang him 'L'Addio' adorably.

I don't think she had even a thought of refusing 'Cousin Dar' this that he asked; though I am certain she would have refused any one else *tout net*. But she had been in the habit of obeying all Dar's behests implicitly from a child, and, now that he had come back, their little *tête-à-tête* on the terrace just now seemed to have quite re-established the old relationship of ruler and ruled between them. So, when he wanted her song of songs from her, he got it at once; just as he had got all it pleased him to require from La Fée Blanche ten years before.

He sat in his lounging-chair while she sang, a little behind, but so that his eyes could watch her face unknown to her. He never moved till the last passionate, quivering notes had died away, and her hands had fallen idly into her lap.

He got up then, and came and stood beside her.

"I shan't ask for anything more after that!" Dar said. "Thank you, Fée."

And if he could not well have said less, yet the tone he spoke in, and the look his face wore satisfied the singer amply.

By-and-by 'my lady' and the two girls went away.

Over his Cavendish and B and S, in 'the Don's' smoking-room, Vere Brabazon would have liked to open his heart to his chief, and tell him of the *belle* passion he had audaciously conceived for the daughter of his house.

Poor 'Hebe's' throat, though, would get so dry and husky every time he had made up his mind to have it out before he went to bed, that the words wouldn't be uttered, and he had to gulp them back with a draught from the species of glass stable-bucket at his elbow.

He didn't know, you see, how Dar might take the avowal, exactly. He felt that he had no earthly business to be in love with Gertie Fairfax; that he certainly oughtn't to

be at Laureston in the present state of things; and that 'the Don' would have fair cause for rebuke and anger, when he should know all, at his remaining there.

For all his girl's face and 'lady-like' manner, no one who knew 'Hebe' ever doubted his pluck and daring. Old hands in India, who liked the boy, took some trouble to keep him out of unnecessary peril, wherein he was perpetually wont to thrust himself; and would have taken an extra risk or so upon themselves cheerfully enough to save him from getting his beauty spoilt. In truth he was as laughingly reckless, as languidly careless of danger, as cool, and as full of dash when the right moment came, as ever was Cavalier, or Mousquetaire Gris.

And yet to-night he shrank, as he had never shrank when it was merely his life that was in question, from 'having it out with the Don' about Gertie, and was fain to smoke steadily on and hold his tongue.

After all, it would do just as well in a day or two, when he should perhaps know his fate from her lips. Yes; he would take the next chance she gave him, and tell all to her.

And, vexed with much taking of thought—about as strange a task to him as picking oakum,—poor 'Hebe' drank his B and S, and, when his pipe was empty, took himself off to bed to sleep upon the only determination he could come to.

'I say, Dar,' Gertie Fairfax said next morning, as she came into the breakfast-room where the two men were fortifying themselves for the hard work of 'the first'; 'I say, Dar, I've just had a note from Flora Hoddesdon. She wants us all to come and lunch at The Place, instead of pic-nicking in the wood, as we arranged last night.'

'Oh, does she?' Dar responded, with his mouth full of toast and caviare; 'well, what will you do?'

'Go, I suppose. It's very kind of her, you know; but it would have been better fun on the grass than in the Hoddesdon dining-room. However, we can't refuse. Nell and

I will 'drive over about one; you and Mr. Brabazon will be there by that time, of course?'

'Of course,' Mr. Brabazon responded, wishing it were one now, and all well.

'Don't know about of course, "Hebe,"' Dar said; 'we've all our work to do to get there, anyhow. You'd better leave "the Childe" at home to-day, Gertie. Vere will be *hors-de-combat* by lunch-time, and you and Fée must take charge of him, and bring him back with you in the phaeton.'

Vere tugged at his moustache, and glanced dubiously at his unconscious host, who was filling a double-sized pocket-flask at the sideboard with a certain curaçoa-punch he affected.

Gertie laughed, and blushed a little.

'I'm afraid Mr. Brabazon will find "the Childe's" perch an uneasy seat for a weary chasseur! Hadn't we better send over an ambulance in the shape of a brougham?'

'Never mind the brougham, Miss Fairfax, thank you!' poor 'Hebe' said, who in his then state of mind thought Gertie's innocent *raillerie* abominably unkind. 'If I do break down I can manage to get back without that, or without over-weighting your ponies, either. Never mind me, you know!'

'Oh, very well!' Gertie answered, wondering what was the matter with him.

And then 'the Don,' who had been nearly out of ear-shot of this little conversation, having completed the filling of his flask, announced that it was time to start; and Vere had to rise and follow his leader.

The birds were plentiful and not too wild, and 'the Don' had made a very satisfactory bag by the time the two came in sight of The Place, close upon one o'clock.

'I suppose we must go up,' Dar said; 'they'll be waiting lunch for us. Though, as Gertie said, it would have been more fun down here, and we should save time besides,' he added, handing over his breech-loader and paraphernalia to the attendant keepers, who had been

in silent ecstasies all the morning at the major's shooting; and who, nodding approval at the line his master indicated for the afternoon, went off with Gaiters, a *confère* in the Hoddesdon's' service, to be hospitably entertained in the servants' hall.

'Very fair bag, ain't it?' Dar observed, as they walked up the drive, 'considering we haven't been over the best of the ground yet.'

'Oh! haven't we?' 'Hebe' responded, wearily. And then; 'By Jove! there they are!' with sudden animation.

'Who? ah! Gertie and Flora.'

The two girls were standing at the swing-gate at the top of the drive, waiting for our friends' coming; and all four walked on together towards the house.

'Where's Fée?' Dar asked of his sister, who was following a little in rear of himself and Flora, with Vere by her side.

'Who's Fée?' asked Flora Hoddesdon.

'She wouldn't come, just at the last,' Gertie said; 'she'd a headache, and was afraid of the sun.'

'The Don' gave the black moustache a twirl, but said nothing.

'And who's Fée?' repeated Flora, watching him sharply out of her black eyes.

'Don't you know?' Dar responded; 'my cousin, Helen Treherne.'

'Oh! Helen Treherne. What a strange sobriquet, isn't it?'

'Not at all, I think, for her. How is Mrs. Hoddesdon?'

And nothing more was said about Fée.

During lunch Flora tried to discover if things were to go on as heretofore between Dar and herself; whether she was to be allowed to take up her parable where it had been broken off; or whether it was to be considered as having come to an end.

She was wise in her generation, Miss Hoddesdon.

She would have liked very much indeed to marry Daryl Fairfax; she would have infinitely preferred him to many a really better *parti*; and she had done her deadliest to win

him that last season. But if it was not to be she was prepared to say '*kismet!*' quietly—to hold her tongue, and give utterance to no indiscreet lamentations. If the bow-string should break and the shaft so carefully aimed fall short, Flora wasn't one to tear her hair (in these days of *chignons* and false *nattes* that might have been an awkward business); she had another string all ready, and was quite able and willing to fit it on, and without loss of time proceed to try again. There was a successor to 'the Don' marked down even now; though kept in *petto* till he should be wanted. It was Flora's game to find out if the second string were likely to be required. She tattled a good deal to Dar with this intent, and got very small hope or encouragement from that individual, who was feeling rather aggrieved, somehow, at Helen's absence.

Altogether, when he rose at last to go, she had come to the conclusion (not without a little pang or two, for poor Flora was, after all, no worse than the rest of her kind, and she did like Dar more than very much) that string No. 2 would have to be used after all.

She bore her disappointment pluckily enough—it wasn't her custom, as she said herself, to give in under punishment—and she wished Dar good-bye, and good sport with a nod and a smile as usual, and then turned back to press Gertie to stay an hour or two longer.

Gertie was a few yards off on the croquet-lawn, pretending, as she tried to fasten the button of her driving-glove, not to see Vere Brabazon coming towards her. Observing which, Flora, who was fairly good-natured *au fond*, thought better of her intention; and went indoors, and had a long inspection of herself before her cheval-glass previously to making her preparations for fitting on her second string forthwith.

'Why not?' she muttered aloud; 'he cares nothing for me. Never has, I suppose. I was a fool to think he ever meant anything. I should be a greater fool still if I wasted any more time over him.'

And Guy seems eager enough. And he's as good a *parti* as Dar, after all—or better. And yet—! And then Miss Hoddesdon shook herself together impatiently, and stamped a neat little Balmoral-booted foot upon the floor, hard.

Meanwhile Gertie, on the lawn, hadn't succeeded in buttoning that obstinate gauntlet yet. Vere was close beside her now, and she had to look up.

'Oh! Mr. Brabazon,' she said, demurely, holding out her wrist to him as she spoke, and not forgetting to notice how eagerly 'Hebe's' fingers closed upon it, 'might I ask you to button this tiresome glove for me?'

Vere was a long time about it, and as it seemed he had nothing to say, she was obliged to speak again.

'You know Dar is gone, I suppose? Don't you care for the afternoon birds?'

'Detest the walking so!' he answered. 'If I might have a pony I shouldn't mind so much. But "the Don" calls that sort of thing unsportsmanlike, and so I have to trudge through these never-ending stubbles in these awful things,' he continued, glancing down ruefully at his shooting-boots.

'I suppose you haven't ordered the ambulance for me, Miss Fairfax?' he said, presently, doing penance, as it were, for his little speech in the breakfast-room, that morning.

'No!' said Gertie, sternly—he had buttoned the refractory gauntlet by this time—'you didn't deserve it!'

'I know that!' pleaded 'Hebe'; 'I misunderstood. I thought you were laughing at me, you know!'

'Laughing at you? I don't understand, Mr. Brabazon!'

'About my shutting up so soon, and that.'

'What nonsense! you ought to have known better. And now I suppose you mean to walk back to Laureston?'

'Well, yes. I shall get there somehow, you know, unless—'

'Unless what?'

'Unless you will consent to depose "the Childe," for once; and take me back on his perch?'

'As if you could sit there!' Gertie laughed. 'No, I can't consent to depose "the Childe." But you may have Nell's place, if you like.'

'May I? What, boots and all?'

'Boots and all. Will you?'

'Won't I?'

'Then come and say good-bye to Mrs. Hoddesdon and Flora,' and she rang for the ponies.

Dancing, and shaking their wilful little heads, under the guidance of 'the Childe,' in whom skill supplied the place of strength, Damon and Pythias came round to the door in due time.

'The gates are open below, Flory?' Gertie said, just before they started, to Miss Hoddesdon, who stood on the steps in her walking dress watching them off, and thinking how grateful Vere ought to be to her for leaving them to themselves all that time on the lawn.

'Yes, they know you're coming,' Flora answered; 'they seem awfully fresh, don't they?' she continued, as the ponies began 'backing and filling,' in their disgust at this colloquy.

'Always are!' Gertie responded, fingering her reins, and nodding to 'the Childe' to let them go; 'they don't get half enough work, poor things. Good-bye!'

And the light phaeton shot like a whirlwind down the drive, and round the sharp corner into a road which led them across the common, and then, by a *détour*, back into the main highway to Laureston.

There was a shorter route, but the ponies being so short of work, Miss Fairfax chose the longer on this occasion. Perhaps, too, she thought that at the rate they were going they would get home quite soon enough, notwithstanding the *détour*.

If she didn't, Vere did. And as he lay back lazily on his cushions, watching his companion under his long eyelashes, he began to wish the distance were doubled at least.

For Gertie was so taken up with the management of her pets that he felt she could hardly be expected to listen to him at present, and half-a-dozen miles could be got over only too quickly. Perforce he held his

tongue, then; not altogether sorry to hold back a while longer from putting his fortune to the touch and winning or losing all, and happy enough in his propinquity to her. So they rolled along, without speaking, at rather an alarming pace for a nervous individual, the light phaeton swaying sharply now and then from side to side in a decidedly ominous manner, and the ponies going so free that it was an open question whether they had bolted or not.

If it hadn't been that both the occupants of the pony-chaise had reasons of their own for not wishing what ought to have been a pleasant *tête-à-tête* to be brought sooner than need be to an end, I believe they would have enjoyed the excitement of the pace thoroughly. As it was, Gertie was wishing her companion would offer to take a pull at the reins, though she couldn't bring herself to admit they had got out of her hand already, and Vere was wondering whether he dared do that thing.

'Looks deuced like a bolt!' he thought. 'Shouldn't like to tell her so yet, though. She thinks she can manage these little beggars; and, by Jove! she does handle 'em beautifully. What a darling she is! and how I wish we were only going slow enough for me to tell her so. I think I could do it now. They'll sober down a bit, perhaps, after this hill, and then——'

And 'Hebe's' languid pulse began to quicken at the thought of what he meant to screw his courage to do then.

Gertie's little hands meanwhile were growing stiff and livid with the strain upon them. Her numbed fingers were clenched desperately on the thin white reins they could hardly feel, but by some ill chance the Hoddesdon groom had shifted them from lower-bar to cheek when the ponies had been put to again at The Place.

'How stupid of Drake not to see to that!' poor Gertie thought, as they began to rise the short, sharp hill that lay between them and the open common. 'I can't hold them a bit! They must be running away!

And those gravel-pits on the common!' And, for all her pluck, Miss Fairfax turned a little pale when she remembered them.

On the other side of the rise they were swinging up now, the road, within half-a-mile, debouched on to a waste, through which ran the deep-rutted track of the heavy carts used in carrying away the gravel from the pits on either side.

Once in this cart-track, and it would take little, at the pace they were going, to bring about a catastrophe. Their only chance, she knew, was to stop the runaways before they quitted the comparatively smooth main road.

Already the hedges were gliding by with a rapidity that made her feel sick and giddy—already her strength was exhausted, and Pythias had followed Damon's example, and, with a jerk of his obstinate little head at the fast-slackening reins, had got the bit fairly between his teeth. There was no help for it; she must confess herself beaten, and ask Vere to help her.

She turned her head towards him, as, ignorant of their common danger, and indolently reckless by nature, 'Hebe' lay back watching her, and speculating as to when she would have had enough of it, or the ponies would become amenable.

'Will you try and stop them, please?' Gertie said, at last. 'I—I think they must be running away, do you know.'

'I've been thinking so for some time,' Vere responded, tranquilly, as he took the reins from her; 'only the road seemed all clear, and you didn't seem to mind, and I was afraid you'd be angry if I told you. Good God! what's the matter?' he cried, his voice losing suddenly all its wonted languor, as he saw her sink back pale and trembling. 'You're not afraid, I know; besides, they can't go another mile at this pace.'

They had reached the top of the hill by this time. The waste land, scarred here and there, right and left of the rough road that ran through it, with rents and chasms that were visible even now, lay before them, a gentle descent of per-

haps half a mile intervening. Gertie pointed forward.

'The gravel-pits, yonder!' she said. 'Can you stop them? There is just time, I think.'

'Hebe' saw it all then—measured the danger, and rose to it, as he had done to greater peril than this, only then it was his own life, not hers, he had had to look to.

He gripped the slender white reins, taking a turn round each hand, and wondered if they were likely to bear the strain. Then he gave Gertie one look that said a good deal.

'Sit still, Miss Fairfax,' he said, 'whatever happens. I think it will be all right. They're running quite straight now; and I shall try and turn them on to the bank on the off-side. We may go over, but it's our best chance.'

Down the slope they rushed faster than ever—the danger was nearing at every stride.

Vere couldn't help looking at his companion again—there was just time for that before he made his effort.

She was very pale, and her hands were clasped tightly together. But there was never a sign or trace of fear upon her face, nor in the eyes she turned to meet his.

'I'm not afraid, Vere,' she said, calling him by his name at that moment unconsciously; 'I can trust to you.'

'That's right!' he muttered, with something that sounded very like 'darling'; 'trust to me. Remember, I shall turn them on to the off-side. Hold firm!'

There was little time to lose now. They were very near the end of the descent, and Vere had to take the first chance that offered—a slight bend in the road, that gave him an advantage. With a sudden, vigorous pull on the off-rein, he got the runaways' heads towards the hedge at a point where the bank was lowest; and, unable to stop themselves, the ponies had to charge the quick-set. The jerk of the pole flung one offender on his knees, the phaeton gave a tremendous lurch, and only just did not go over. And then Vere was lifting Gertie from it in

his arms; and 'the Childo,' who had behaved splendidly throughout, was at the heads of the discomfited pair, and all danger was over. Whereupon Miss Fairfax did what she never remembered doing in all her life before, and fainted dead away. Horribly scared at the deadly pallor on her face, 'Hebe' despatched 'the Childo' for assistance to the nearest cottage, and then, not knowing what on earth to do, deposited his charge tenderly on the carriage cushions, which he had flung out upon the bank, and began to adjure her passionately to speak to him, if only one word.

Some minutes elapsed before poor Gertie recovered consciousness. But presently the faint colour came back to her face; her eyes opened; and she saw Vere hanging over her with a look of such pitiable helplessness and concern on his usually *insouciant* visage that almost made her laugh, even then; while her ears caught his devout expression of relief and thankfulness.

She said nothing just at that moment, but the little hand he was chafing so tenderly between his own wasn't drawn away; and Vere seemed quite content with that.

By-and-by 'the Childo' came back. But the help he brought with him in the shape of a comely cotter's wife was no longer needed. Gertie professed herself quite right again, and quite ready to start.

So 'Hebe' put her carefully back into the phaeton, and took the reins himself this time, without a word of objection from her, and then they started.

At a foot pace over the rough road across the common, the yawning gravel-pits making Gertie shiver and close her eyes, and looking uncommonly ugly, even to Vere's careless glance, as he thought what might have happened to his wilful love by this time if she had been alone; and at a sober trot along the green lanes on the other side, the ponies thoroughly discomfited and ashamed, and scarcely needing Vere's firm hand over them. And so to Laureston.

Little was said by either on the way.

He felt it was no time to speak the words that had been trembling on his lips an hour before, and Gertie's heart was too full for any idle talk just now.

Once she had put out her hand to him, and—they were on the terrace then—striven to utter collected words of thanks. But her voice had faltered strangely, and the warm tears would start unbidden into her dark eyes, usually so full of laughter and badinage. So she had left her gratitude unspoken, and had gone off to tell the story of her adventure to 'my lady,' leaving Vere, though, happier than he had been for many a long day, with the sound of his own name, as she had breathed it, lingering divinely in his ears.

Meanwhile, the birds in the out-lying fields had been put up, and knooked over to 'the Don's' entire satisfaction. Hodges, the Laureston keeper, chary of praise as he was, grunted assent to the major's remark, that, on the whole, to-day was about as good a 'first' as he had known, while he received over the latter's equipment once more; and Dar prepared for a sharp walk home across the fields.

'Wonder why Fée didn't come to lunch to-day?' he soliloquised, between little clouds of blue tobacco smoke, as he trampled through the crackling stubble on his way back, alone. 'I suppose the headache was a headache; or perhaps Gertie has been putting some nonsense into her head about Flora, and she was afraid of being *de trop*. There's nothing more annoying than for outsiders to imagine there's anything between oneself and a woman when there isn't, and when, as in this case, there won't be either. Flora! why she's carried on the game she's been trying with me with half-a-dozen fellows already. I don't mean to be my wife's *pis-aller*, if I know it, by Jove!'

He stopped a moment to knock the ashes out of his pipe, and to replenish it, here.

On the farther side of the field he was crossing lay the road that ran from The Place to Laureston. Bordered by a close-clipped hedge, side

by side upon the footpath, walking very leisurely, two people came in sight while Dar was striking his vesuvian and getting his fresh pipe fairly under way.

The one nearest the hedge, a woman, kept her face slightly turned from it, and towards her companion (a tall, dashing, and unmistakeable Plunger, in spite of his round hat and pékin shooting-jacket), who, with his horse's bridle over his arm, lounged along quite contentedly.

When his meerschaum was blazing away again 'the Don' turned to resume his march. As he did so, the tall figure on the footpath (which ran parallel with the line he was taking) caught his eye.

'What's Guy Devereux doing here?' he thought, carelessly. He knew the man at once—a major on the cavalry staff at Maidlow, who had once served in his own corps.

'And who's the woman he's flirting with so heavily?'

Just then Guy Devereux's incognita turned her face almost fully towards him, and consequently away from Dar. The sinking sun lit up something in her hat. A long white feather, the same 'the Don' had stood watching the evening before at the Baddingley Station, when La Fée Blanche drove away with his sister.

'That's it, is it?' Dar ejaculated. 'There's no mistaking that white feather. We're carrying on a little game with that fellow Devereux, are we? A secret little game, it seems, since we resort to *migraine* and solitary walks. Little fool you are, Fée. You don't know Guy as I do, or I doubt you'd trust him quite so far. I'd better drop down on them, I think.'

And 'the Don' half turned out of his course to put his thought into practice.

The pair on the footpath, however, were either aware of him or dreaded interruption from other quarters, for they quitted the high road for a green lane that ran into it just there, and were out of sight at once.

Dar checked himself with his hard smile, curving the ends of his moustache the while, and went straight on his way.

'What am I about?' he muttered aloud: 'what business is it of mine? I suppose Fée can take care of herself. I don't like the mystery of the thing, though. Pleading a headache to compass a *tête-à-tête* with a man like Guy Devereux don't exactly look well. Hardly like her, I should have said. But then she never expected to be recognized at this time of day. She oughtn't to have shown that white feather. Bah! She's a woman! Why the devil should I be surprised at anything of this sort?'

I dare say he succeeded in persuading himself that he was not surprised in the least before he reached Laureston. But he debated, *chemin faisant*, as to whether he ought to tell Helen what he had seen, and whether, as a simple matter of duty, he oughtn't to tell her, besides, something of the man in whose compromising company he had seen her.

'If she cares for him,' he argued, 'all I can say will be rather worse than useless. If she don't, why is she walking with him in country lanes alone at this hour, when she's supposed to be a victim to *migraine* indoors?'

On the whole Dar came to the conclusion that it would be better to bide his time and not interfere at present.

Devereux, for aught he knew, might have won the right to play *cavaliier seul*. And yet, why on earth should she make a mystery of what might be harmless and natural enough? It was the mystery, of course, which he found so unpleasant. He hadn't given Helen—whom, cynic as he was, he couldn't bring himself to think hardly of so soon—he hadn't given Cousin Helen credit for this turn for petty plotting. Gertie might be able, perhaps, to tell him something which would explain all.

When, ten minutes later, he had mounted the terrace steps, Gertie, who had been lying in wait for him there, came upon him unawares, and *did* tell him something which he had been a long way from ever dreaming of.

Vere Brabazon's time had come

at last, it seemed. When Gertie had come down stairs after rendering account of what had befallen her to 'my lady,' and had tutored her voice to tell him coherently and steadily that which was but indeed his due, then 'Hebe' knew that if he were to speak at all it should be now. So, once again, the old, old story that is ever new was whispered into eager-listening ears; and when it was ended the teller felt that it had not been told in vain.

This was the news which Gertie had undertaken to break to Dar.

'The Don' received it with his usual tranquillity, though he was rather surprised, and said he supposed children would be children, and made rather light of it, till his pet's eyes began to flash a little under his badinage; and then he put his arm round her and kissed her, and told her (in that changed voice few but his sister and his mother ever heard, and even they not often) that it pleased him well to know she loved the man who was to himself as a brother already, and to whom he could trust even one so dear to him as she was.

'Dar! Dar! how kind you are to me,' murmured Gertie, through her happy tears, as her head rested on his broad shoulder. She knew how much these few fond words meant, coming from one like him.

Then she took him off to 'my lady,' to put the matter in the best light for the maternal eyes.

'My lady' heard what both had got to say; and then, with a pleased smile that belied her words, told her daughter that was rather absurd, and so forth; that she ought to marry a *prise-parti*, like Peurthyn or Polwheal; that she and Vere were a pair of foolish children; and that if they insisted on marrying for love they must be prepared for all sorts of terrible consequences. But 'my lady's' only condition was that her *beau-fils* to be should leave the army and settle down with his wife in the vacant Dower House in the Park, the fact being that 'my lady' had taken a great fancy to 'Hebe' from the first—possibly because her own Dar had risked his life to save the boy's—and that she

had, I fear, meedames, rather heterodox notions of what constitutes a good match.

It was evidently all right; for Gertie presently ordered Vere off to dress before time, his presence being required in 'my lady's' morning-room so soon as that operation should be completed, from which apartment Mr. Brabazon issued forth, half an hour or so later, radiant and happy, leading his hostess down stairs to the drawing-room.

That night all whom it might immediately concern were aware that Gertie Fairfax and Vere Brabazon, of 'Ours,' were engaged, with the cordial approval of the powers that were.

Helen Treherne had the whole story of their loves poured into her ears as she and her cousin sat together in the latter's room, during the pleasant half-hour before Pincot and dressing.

'He's to leave the army, of course,' Gertie said; 'I should never be let to go out there with him, you know. Oh! if Dar would only find me a sister-in-law and sell out too, I should have nothing left to wish for. It's horrible to think he's going out again in December.'

'Perhaps he won't go out again, who knows?' Helen said.

'He will unless——. Why, he's talking of it already, and it's barely twenty-four hours since he came. It will take some one stronger than the Madre and me to keep him in England, Nell.'

'Well, isn't there Flora Hodgeson?'

'Flora?' Gertie shook her little head very wisely. 'It won't be Flora, Nell, you'll see. I watched them to-day at luncheon. Either it never was she, or it's some one else now. It's all over between them.'

'Vrai?' Helen asked.

'I'm sure of it. I only wish I were as sure about the some one else. And so the headache's better, dear?'

'Oh! yes; it's quite well now,' Helen affirmed.

It was never very bad, I believe, that *migraine* with which Cousin Helen had chosen to afflict herself that afternoon. 'The Don' perhaps

had hit on its true cause when he put it down, rather egotistically, to a desire on Fée's part not to be *de trop* at The Place under certain probable circumstances. Anyhow, Helen went away to her own room, after her conversation with Gertie, perfectly convalescent.

The lovers spent the evening on the terrace in the moonlight romantically enough. When Dar came into the Long Drawing-room after dinner he found Helen all alone at the piano playing Chopin to herself; 'my lady' he had just quitted, established on her sofa in her own chamber again.

'Why didn't you drive over with Gertie, Fée?' 'the Don' asked, as he came up to his cousin. 'She said you'd a headache. The drive would have done you good.'

'I think it would now,' she answered; 'but I thought I was better at home. It was fortunate I didn't go, wasn't it? It's awful to think what might have happened to poor Gertie if only I, instead of Mr. Brabazon, had been with her.'

He paused after this a little while before he asked her,

'But you went out somewhere, to-day?'

She never noticed the slight inflection in his voice that might have told her this was no such idle question, from his lips, as it seemed.

'Yes. In the park; for about an hour, at sundown. Major Devereux called here; and I went out after he was gone.'

'I see,' Dar said, 'and only into the park? no further?'

'I was alone, you know. Why do you ask?'

She lifted her face to his as she spoke, and met his gaze unflinchingly.

'She does it well!' he thought; 'she must know what I mean, even if she didn't recognize me when she was with him. I am not to interfere, I suppose.'

Then he replied aloud, 'I fancied I saw you as I came home, that's all! at least I did see your white feather in the distance.'

'When?' Helen asked, smiling. The smile seemed to stab him.

'On the road between this and The Place—about ten minutes from the lower lodge. Of course I was mistaken.'

'Of course!' she answered; 'I wasn't out of sight of the terrace all the afternoon.'

'And who wears a hat like yours here?' he questioned rather suddenly. A very simple idea had just occurred to him.

'No one but Gertie, that I know of,' Helen said; 'I believe my toque to be unique down here. Gertie's feather is black, you know.'

'It was a white feather I saw,' he said, watching her keenly, and thinking again how well she did it. 'And it was yours—I could have sworn.'

'Strange!' laughed Helen.

'My mistake, of course!' Dar said. And said no more.

But as he sat alone that night in his own room, smoking over his log-fire, it seemed quite clear to him that she meant to keep her own counsel, and that he had no right to interfere. Right? What was she to him, or he to her? There might be a hundred reasons why she should walk with Guy Devereux *tête-à-tête*, of which he knew, and could know, nothing. He hadn't, indeed, given her credit for so much diplomatic *rouerie* and *sang-froid*. But what grounds had he for thinking she was incapable of either? He hadn't seen her since she was a child. The child was a woman now; and how much faith in her kind had his experience taught him?

Daryl Fairfax grew quite his wonted cynical self again, over his last pipe that night.

He had settled, he persuaded himself, in his own mind that his philosophy was the true one.

The days came and went. There was little outward change in his manners towards Cousin Helen—he didn't call her Fée now—but she at least felt sometimes that the Cousin Dar of the old time had altered more than she had at first imagined. And not for the better.

Since that first night on the terrace they had spent others there; and Helen Treherne was fain to confess, not without a strange, sharp

pang, that her hero could be harsh, and bitter, and unjust, like an ordinary mortal.

Only, that if he had been the ordinary mortal, she wouldn't have cared much for the discovery. But being what he was—her hero since she could remember him—she did care a good deal.

'The Don' was growing angry with himself and with her. Twice since that first time—twice ere the first days of October—the white feather had gleamed before his eyes as he neared home; and both times in the attendant cavalier he had recognized Guy Devereux.

Both times, too, something—he could hardly define the feeling—had prevented him from setting all doubt at rest, and making certainty doubly sure. He had no right. What was she to him? Ah! more than he had ever dreamed a woman could be—more than he would have acknowledged to himself then.

Helen and he were left much alone together just now. 'My lady' was an invalid, and Gertie and her lover had plenty to occupy them. And one night, when he had argued himself into the belief that he could talk on the subject gently and firmly and wisely, as became one who stood towards her in the relationship he did, Dar, at last, spoke words which first astonished, and then wounded and angered Helen sorely.

It don't much matter what they were to us; but when he and his cousin parted for the night, the one felt they were words it would be very hard to forget or to forgive; the other, that he had been wrong in uttering them at all—wrong in thinking she would trust him—a fool for holding her what, in spite of all till now, in his heart of hearts, he had held her to be. Another month passed; and 'the Don' began to think of his preparations for going out next mail to rejoin. It was the first week in November; he could catch the Marseilles steamer of the tenth.

So he told them one morning that he was going. It was sooner than he need go. But what was there

to stay longer for? Certainly not to witness the *dénouement* of that mysterious affair between Helen and Guy Devereux. Better, he thought, that he should be miles away if that was to end as he believed it would.

So he wouldn't see the silent, wistful pleading of 'my lady's' face; she was too proud to ask her son to stay in England for her sake; so he made light of poor Gertie's entreaties; and misconstrued Helen's sudden pallor, and the look that in her own despite came into the dark violet eyes, so true, though as he thought so false, when they learned his resolve. And yet had she been all he remembered, all he had once thought her, it might have been different. It wouldn't have been so hard to give up the excitement of his soldier's life, and the brilliant work 'Ours' was doing far away up in the 'north-west,' if he had found the dream which, hard, and cynical, and selfish as he might be, he had dreamed once realized in Cousin Helen.

But that was not to be. And he hardened his heart, bitterly. Hardened it against those he loved, and those who loved him. One there was who loved him more than they all—one whose love he was flinging blindly away—who had deemed that words of his had wronged her past forgiveness; but who felt all anger die in her when she knew she was so soon to lose him.

For he was her hero—unworthy of her perhaps, as he was, and, to her, greater, better, nobler than all others.

If he had misjudged her, she couldn't hate him. If he had wronged her, she could pardon. For through all she loved him.

It was a cruel, hard time for 'La Fée Blanche,' those last few days of 'the Don's' stay at Laureston. But it was almost worse for him.

Have you ever known how—

'To be wrath with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain?'

He was wroth with her; though even when at the Maidlow ball she gave Guy Devereux the valse she

had kept for him, and which he wouldn't ask for, and his jealousy had found confirmation of all his suspicions in the Plunger's bearing towards her; even when he called her frankness towards himself something worse than falseness, when he tried to hate, he loved her most.

And now they were to part, sundered by a doubt, a suspicion, that seemed flimsy enough, but which to this man was irrefutable.

He thought of this that afternoon which was to be his last at Laureston as he walked along a narrow path in the Pleasance, his feet rustling among the sere yellow leaves that lay thick upon the ground.

It was a favourite lounge for outdoor smoking purposes, that little skilfully - arranged wood which bounded the deer-park on one side, and stretched away for a mile or so in the direction of The Place.

Dar strolled moodily along, his hands in the pockets of his shooting-jacket, and the smoke from his *brûle-gueule* curling in blue clouds in the still, mild air.

It might be the last time he should ever walk there; to-morrow he would be gone. In his bitterness of spirit he wished he had never come to Laureston, never seen her face—never, as little by little he had done, learned to love her with the last love of his life.

Proof-armoured, as they who knew him best would have deemed him, he had gone down before a woman's weapons like another man; had been tricked by a fair face, and a false smile, and lying lips, and treacherous eyes, like even unto those at whom he had been wont to make mock. Vanquished? 'No! not quite!' he muttered between his teeth, set hard on the amber mouth-piece. 'She don't know of this cursed folly. It'll be my own fault if she ever does. It's all over now. She and I will never meet again. Bah! Am I a child, to be as weak as this?' And Dar laughed bitterly.

On a sudden his face changed, and, with a curse, he halted, and drove his heel savagely into the turf.

Half-a-dozen paces from him, with its bridle flung over a leafless branch,

watching him out of its great, deep eyes, stood a horse he knew only too well. It was 'Ravenswing,' Guy Devereux's charger. The rider could not be far off. What was he doing here? 'The Don' guessed easily enough.

His right hand clenched, as though he would have liked to dash it in Devereux's face — this man, for whose sake Helen, his Helen, had stooped to falsehood and deceit—in a paroxysm of jealous rage worthy of the love-mania of a boy. That was soon over. Men who have lived his life, if they can't exorcise, at least learn to keep in hand the devil they know to be within them. And the look that was not good to see only just swept across 'the Don's' face, and left the hard smile a little harder under the black moustache.

But this time, at all events, he would meet her face to face. He had not long to wait.

Standing a little back from the winding pathway, hidden by the gnarled trunk of the king oak, already he could see the gleam of the white feather, as the wearer of the velvet toque he knew so well came towards him, in close and confidential converse with Devereux the Plunger.

He set his teeth hard, and stood motionless as the trunk he leaned against.

'Ravenswing' pricked his ears, and whinnied, as his master came round the last turn of the path; and Dar lifted his eyes then and saw—what made him start and pale to the very lips.

He saw the velvet toque, and the long white feather, and the long streamers floating behind; but instead of Helen Treherne's fair hair, it was Flora Hoddesdon's dark braids that curled beneath it—her face, and not his cousin's, that he looked upon.

Laughing lightly at something Guy was saying to her, Flora passed by, and stood patting the horse's arching neck when the rider was in the saddle, and exchanging a tender adieu ere he rode away. Then, after one quick glance about her, Flora moved off in her turn, and Dar was alone with his discovery. The

simple truth was plain at last. This was the shadow his cynicism and mistrust had let him make a reality; this was the miserable cause of the wrong he had done the woman he had learned to love—done, not so much by the words he had spoken, as by the thoughts he had thought of her. This wretched error was driving him from her now—had, perhaps, sundered them for ever.

I don't think I need tell you all that passed through his mind as he walked back—all the feelings of self-reproach, regret, repentance, not unmingled with something akin to happiness. There was happiness for him at least in this, that Fée had never merited the ill he had dared think of her by word or deed; that she had been right, and he wrong. This much he would tell her before he left Laureston, and ask of her what it was his wont to ask of none—forgiveness.

He found her presently in the library, and alone. He opened the door so noiselessly that she never raised her head. She was sitting on a low seat before the flickering wood fire, half in the light, half in the shadow, bending a little forward, her chin resting on her hand.

At her feet lay Dar's bloodhound, 'Odin,' watching her with loving, wistful eyes.

The other end of the long oak-panelled room, where Dar stood, was all in semi-darkness, and, by the gleam of the burning brands, he could see every detail of the picture before him. He could see the shimmer of Fée's golden hair as the light fell on it; he could see the pale, sad look upon her fair face; the fitful flash of the opals in a ring, his gift, which she wore upon the hand that rested on 'Odin's' head.

He saw and marked all this as he stopped a moment near the doorway, still and silent, feeling, by the keenness of his remorse, how great was the wrong he had done her, even in his love. But the bloodhound moved uneasily, conscious of his master's presence there; and Helen, roused from her reverie, turned and looked towards him.

Then Dar came out of the dark-

ness into the light, and she saw who it was.

She rose hurriedly, as if to go, while he was bending over his dog, as though he had barely noticed her.

'Don't go, Fée!' Dar said, when she had moved a step or two from him. 'Don't run away from me! I've something to tell you, if you will listen to me.'

The old name, the old tone. What did it mean? She had stopped when he spoke, and waited, without a word, for him to go on. And he went on, and made his atonement—such atonement as he could—and his confession unflinchingly, leaning his arm upon the high, carved mantelpiece, and with his eyes fixed upon her face, trying to read his sentence there. And so Helen learned at last what had been keeping them so long asunder.

'Fée, can you forgive me?'

She answered him never a word, but she gave him her hand—the hand that wore the opal ring.

Then Dar spoke again, with all the passion that was in him. And Fée learned something more—something that made full amends to her for all the misery of those last days.

He was telling her—her hero, whom she thought to part from so miserably on the morrow—that he loved her; asking so eagerly, so passionately, with look and voice so changed she hardly knew him, if she could trust herself, after all, to him and his love for the time to come; asking if he should go or stay. Slowly, as his strong right arm closed round and clasped her to him, the golden head sank down upon his shoulder, till her face, sad and pale no longer, was half hidden from him there; and, as he bent over her, the answer to all his pleading came in these low-whispered words—

'Stay, for me, Dar! I have loved you all my life!'

And here, I think, had better end the story of the White Feather.

'Ruy.'

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A PUBLIC NUISANCE.

IT is no uncommon thing with folks of an ingenious turn to make 'capital,' as the saying is, out of what at first sight seems calamity. As, for instance, a friend of mine, an Alpine traveller, and an indefatigable naturalist, whilst on a journey of exploration in his favourite mountainous region, one night retired to his couch exhausted by the fatigues of march and faint for sleep. It was denied him, however. Not that 'Nature's soft nurse' was ill-disposed towards him; not that his conscience was ill at ease; not that he had supped rashly or inordinately. It was because he was wanted for supper. That ravenous monster, the Alpine flea, but meagrely fed through many months on hardy herdsmen and chamois hunters, sniffed his tender carcase, and without even the warning of 'fe-fo-fium,' fell on him from the roof rafters, and commenced his savage and sanguinary repast. A man of common mind and courage would

have engaged the enemy until exhausted, and then yielded at discretion. Not so my friend. He struck a light, and calculating his chances of a night's rest, and finding the balance heavily against him, he coolly dressed himself, and unpacking his microscopical instruments, selected and impaled a few of the largest and finest of his tormentors, and passed a pleasant and profitable night in investigating the peculiarities of the form and structure of *pulex irritans*. There is no knowing how much of ingenuity dwells in the human brain till it is pressed between the hard mill-stones of necessity. Before now, despairing captives have beguiled the tedium of dungeon life by a study of the habits and manners of the very rats which at first were so much their horror and aversion.

I have an enemy more tormenting than any flea that ever hopped—more voracious than the rat, inasmuch as he feeds not on my bread

and my cheese, but on my brain. I have little mouths to fill, and little feet to cover, and little backs to clothe; I have house-rent to pay, and water-rate; I have to contribute shillings and pounds towards the maintenance of the poor, and the police, and the main drainago; I have to provide against the visit of the income-tax collector; and to meet these various demands, being a scribbler o. the hard-working sort, I am compelled to set my pen dancing over the paper with considerable rapidity and perseverance. And I am very willing to do so. I am willing to sit down in the morning early as any tailor or cobbler, and make my hay while the sun shines. But this my tormentor forbids. He, too, has hay to make while the sun shines. He makes his hay out of my green hopes, sapped and withered; he grinds my brain to make him bread. He bestrides my sober pen, all sudden and unexpected, as it is plodding industriously over the paper, and sets it jigging to the tune of 'Hop Light Loo' or the 'Ratcatcher's Daughter.' He fills the patient, well-intentioned quill with the jingling idiotcy common in the mouths of banjo-playing, bonerattling Sambos and Mumbos, and turns the common sense about to be uttered by it into twaddle and profitless nonsense. He breaks into my storehouse of thought and turns its contents topsy-turvy. He seizes my golden hours, and condemns them to a lingering and horrible death, mauling them and pulling them into flinders, and leaving me to make the best I may of the few minutes his monkey mischief has left entire. The name of this blowfly in my larder, this weevil in my meal-jar, is Organ Grinder.

It is, of course, well known to me that, in accordance with a recent Act of Parliament, I am at liberty to set the engine of law in motion to crush the organ man if he annoys me; but there is a power much greater than any Act of Parliament ever passed and backed by it. My tormentor may grin defiance at his arch-enemy, Bass. No less true than paradoxical, the superior power in question consists in a weakness—the

weakness inherent in every free-born Englishman, to succour all such as he may find downtrodden and driven to the wall. *Why* downtrodden is a question which the noble-minded Briton never stops to inquire. It is enough that a poor fellow is down, to enlist for him the Briton's heartiest sympathies. Never mind how richly he may have merited the shoulder hit that laid him low, he has only to groan plaintively as he lies in the mire—to whine a little, and beseech pity, and a hundred hands are stretched forth to lift him up, and a hundred mouths are opened to cry 'Poor fellow!' There is ointment for his bruises in shape of a gathering of money, and he is set on his legs and hailed as a man and a brother. Who did it? A parcel of stuck-up, purse-proud, bloated aristocrats! Why don't you hit one your own size? Hit him again, if you dare. This noble sentiment has been of immense service to the downtrodden organ grinder. The law, acting in behalf of O. G.'s suffering victims, having knocked O. G. down, the highminded but tough-skinned British mob has set him up again, and taken him under its special protection. I have no inclination to dispute its right to do so. It admires organ grinding. To be sure, the fact of its utter indifference to the existence of barrel-organs and hurdy-gurdies before the passing of the Act is calculated to give rise to the suspicion that pig-headed obstinacy may have something to do with it, but there is nothing for certain. The miller who could sleep tranquilly while his mill was clashing and crunching and rumbling, awoke the moment the mill stopped. The mob is the best judge of what suits it. It likes its music full flavoured, and with plenty of grit in it. A weaker quality falls idly on its tympanum. Some animals are so thin-skinned that the titillation of a hair will drive them to madness, whereas the rhinoceros delights to have his hide rasped with the prongs of a pitchfork; but that is no reason why the rhinoceros should not be tickled if he likes it.

So it comes about that the organ





Drawn by G. B. (1894.)

HUNTING SKETCHER—AN "OLD HAND."

grinder finds in the notice of ejection that was served on him a new lease. But a few months since he was a skulking, surly wretch, with a heavy tread, a hanging head, and the general air of a felon, hopeless as to this life, and by no means comfortably assured of the next; a broad-shouldered muscular, doomed for some monstrous iniquity to tramp the highways and byeways of a foreign land, fettered eternally to a demon of discord—a lunatic Orpheus riding him old-man-of-the-sea-wise, torturing his sensitive ear, and mocking his weariness with ‘funny’ music worthy of St. George’s-in-the-Fields, or, at the very least, of Earlswood. A treacherous, lean dog, ready for a halfpenny to mow and grin and show his teeth to win the smiles of little children at the window, and equally ready, should he be rashly informed that the little ones are ill, to haggle and make terms as to his consenting to cease from racking their poor little heads with his horrible din; a worse than ghoul, hunting for sickness that he might make a meal of it, with vulture eyes for sadly drooping window-blinds and muffled knockers, and a keen scent for mercifully-strewn tan, that the wooden leg of his engine of torture may find standing in the midst of it.

Distinguished by such unamiable characteristics, it was impossible to love the organ man; still, seeing him go about so evidently conscious of his own unworthiness, so downcast and depressed, and altogether miserable, your indignation was not unfrequently tinged with pity, and you had at least the gratification of noting that, however much he plagued and tormented you, he never appeared to get any satisfaction out of the transaction beyond the grudging penny flung to him. But since he has been ‘persecuted’ the aspect of the case has become altogether altered. The organ grinder is no longer a glum villain serving his term of life as though it were a punishment, and not a privilege. The dull dead log has sprouted green leaves, and become quite a sprightly member of society. True, he has not given up the ghoul

business, nor the lean dog business, but now he is a ghoul in a cut-away coat in place of a shroud; the lean dog cocks his ears, and carries his tail with an insolent and defiant curl in it. He is a man and a brother in pursuit of his honest calling. He has music to vend in ha’porths and penn’orths; and if you don’t choose to buy, there are plenty of householders in your street that will. Don’t put yourself out of the way, my dear sir; don’t stand there at your parlour window shaking your head, and frowning, and making threatening gestures; he is not playing for *your* edification; he is playing to the people next door but one; they are his regular customers, and take a penn’orth of music of him every morning as regularly as they take a penn’orth of dog’s meat for Mungo. A pretty thing, indeed, that you should presume to order him off just because you don’t happen to like music! You might as reasonably prohibit the dog’s-meat man from calling at number thirteen because nobody on your premises has an appetite for dog’s meat. This is the argument provided for the organ grinder by his noble champions and supporters, and he is not slow to avail himself of it. How can you be out of temper with a poor fellow who knows not a word of the language in which you are abusing him, and therefore cannot retaliate? It is mean, it is cowardly, it is un-English. It would not be surprising if he turned round on you and pelted you with such broken bits of English as he is master of. But he is a good-humoured fellow, and does nothing of the kind; if you shake a stick at him, he replies by thrusting out his tongue, and making a funny face at you. If you appear at your gate and order him off, he is moved to no worse than playfully applying his thumb to the tip of his nose, and twiddling his outstretched fingers. Yah! Go in. Stuff your ears with wool. It will be quite time enough for him to go when he sees you rushing down the street in search of a policeman. Even if you have the good luck to find one in time, and the courage to give the ruffian into custody (which means accompanying the ‘charge’

to the station-house, and being hooted and chaffed by the organ grinder's friend, the mob, all the way you go), you will probably find the game hardly worth the candle. The prisoner does not know one word of English, explains the interpreter to the magistrate, and was quite unaware that the gentleman wished him to go away. But, says his worship, the gentleman states that he took the trouble to come out into his garden to motion you away. That is true, replies the interpreter, after referring his worship's remarks to the now deeply penitent grinder, but the prisoner misunderstood—he thought that the gentleman was come out to dance.

It may occur to the inexperienced that all this is most unnecessary fuss, the remedy for the alleged grievance being so obvious. The organ grinder is no fool; all he seeks is your penny, and cares not how little he does for it; what, therefore, can be easier than to save your time and your temper by sending him out so paltry a sum with the civil message that you won't trouble him to play. You may be making some sacrifice of principle, it may cause you momentary annoyance to suspect that your enemy grins as he turns from your gate with your penny in his pocket, but look on the other side of the question! The blow-fly banished from your larder, your meal-jar freed from the devouring weevil, your quill rescued from its impish rider, your golden hours round and sound and all your own!

You are right, oh innocent adviser! Cheap, dirt cheap would it be if, on payment of a penny, immunity from persecution might be purchased. It would be a stroke of business on the accomplishment of which we might well be proud if one bought off the whole brigand army at a like figure. But beware of the pitfall! Should you be weak enough to yield that first single penny your doom is sealed. It is merely a hushing fee entitling you to rank amongst the organ man's regular customers. The torturer will now regard himself as regularly engaged, and exactly a week from the time

when you committed the fatal error, he will turn up again, his countenance beaming with a smile of recognition as you amazedly look out on him from your window, and he won't budge until he gets his penny. Nor is this all. You are duly reported at the head-quarters of the sworn brotherhood of grinders as another to the long list of victims willing to pay for peace, and for the future no organ or hurdy-gurdy bearer will pass your door without giving you the opportunity for exercising your philanthropy. There is no cure for the evil; organ-grinding has become a settled institution of the country, and as such must be endured.

And having arrived at this conviction comes in the example of the Alpine traveller quoted at the commencement of this paper—of the poor prisoner who beguiled the tedium of incarceration by an examination of the habits and manners of the rats which at first were his horror. Might I not be better employed than to sit moping in my chamber with vinegar rags adorning my throbbing temples because of these Italian rats squealing under my window? Were their habits and customs less interesting than those of the four-legged vermin? Did I know more about one than the other? Decidedly; but the advantage was with the quadrupedal animal. I *do* happen to know something about *mus decumanus*. I know that its hind legs are longer than its front ones, that it has a propensity for burrowing under walls, and that it commonly sits on its hind legs and holds the food it eats in its fore paws. I know that its nature is very cunning; that, acting in concert, rats have been observed to cart off unbroken eggs from a basket, one, acting as 'cart,' lying on his back and cradling the egg between his fore paws, while two other rats, acting as teamsters, have dragged home the 'cart' by its tail. I have heard, and place equal reliance in, the story of the rat that emptied a narrow flask of oil by lowering his caudal appendage into it, withdrawing it, licking it clean, lowering it again, and so on. But I don't know half as much about the

organ grinder. That his fore limbs are shorter than his lateral may be assumed, but what about his burrowing? That he *does* burrow is certain, because during certain hours of the twenty-four he, happily, disappears. He must have a home somewhere. He is met at all hours of the day as far away as Highgate, Hammersmith, and Sydenham, but come night wherever he may be, he is invariably found to be turning his steps in a north-westerly direction. However far away, he is rarely seen refreshing himself at an inn; he was never yet known to apply for a bed at the wayside country public-house. It is doubtful if he made such an application whether it would be entertained. If a man on horseback applied for lodging the matter might be easily arranged, the man to his chamber and the horse to the stable; but a man with an organ! They are inseparable. He is an organ man—a man with an organ on his back, as other unfortunates have a lump on theirs—with the difference that the former, for business purposes, admits of being occasionally slewed round to the front part of the man's body. Fancy letting a clean and decent bed to a man with an organ on his back!

Then as to the grinder's family. Has he a wife and children? How do they employ themselves? Are the white-mice boys and the guinea-pig boys, the monkey-boys and the boys with the hurdy-gurdies the organ grinder's children? Are those his daughters who go about with a silk handkerchief about their heads, singing and playing on a tambourine? Where is his wife? Is she still to be found working in the vineyards of the sunny South, or does she reside with her 'old man' on Saffron Hill, occupying a snug little room, ironing the grinder's shirts and mending his stockings and preparing something comforting and savoury for the poor fellow's supper, when at midnight he stumps in from Sydenham or Brentford? Does Mrs. Grinder ever go out washing or charring to eke out her husband's earnings? What were his earnings? Did the little Grinders go to school? Was it all work and no play with

father Grinder? or did he occasionally take his pipe and his pint and seek diversion like another working man?

I had frequently observed that the organ grinder ceased from his persecution earlier on Saturday than all the other days of the week. On other evenings he was to be heard as late as ten and even eleven o'clock; but on Saturdays, even though you wanted an organ-man, it would be difficult indeed to find one after four or five o'clock in the afternoon. How was this? Was Saturday evening an 'off-time' with the grinder? Was he a patron of the Saturday half-holiday movement? If so, how did he profit by the indulgence? Did he belong to some corps of volunteers? not likely. Did he make one of four for a quick pull up the river? He could not well accomplish such a feat without divesting himself of that peculiarly blue corderoy jacket of his; and the sight of an organ-man in his shirt sleeves is one that never yet met human gaze. Did he take a cheap excursion ticket and go to the Isle of Wight or Margate? What! without his organ? Preposterous. How *did* he spend the only work-a-day evening he could spare from drudgery? The only way to set the question at rest was by personal investigation. No time like the present, which happened to be a Saturday afternoon.

Putting on a slouchy coat and a slouchy cap, I at once set out for Saffron Hill, making it my business to call on my road for an artist friend whose sketches have often delighted the readers of this magazine. My pretence for desiring his company was that there was a probability of his finding a picture worth sketching in some one of the many strange places I purposed taking him to; but my main object in soliciting his company was that I might be benefited by his protection in the event of my being forced into doubtful company—our artist being a man of extraordinary size and muscular development.

It was a lonely evening for such a wild-goose chase as was ours—dark over head, miry under foot,

and drizzling wretchedly of rain. I call it a wild-geese chase, and it was little less, for beyond the popularly-accepted belief that the home of the organ grinder was 'somewhere in the neighbourhood of Hatton Garden,' we were in utter ignorance of the abiding place of the individual of whom we were in search. Hatton Garden, as the reader is possibly aware, is a long and wide street opening from the crown of Holborn Hill.

At 7 p.m., the darkness and the drizzling rain nothing abated, we arrived at Hatton Garden, and diligently perambulated that lengthy and retired street from this end to the other, but either in or out of harness not a solitary organ man did we meet. I say out of harness on my companion's account, not mine own; he was quite sure, he said, that he could detect an organ-man even though disguised in the garb of a Quaker. No opportunity, however, for a display of his extraordinary sagacity occurred; and we arrived at the end of Hatton Garden and found ourselves at Hatton Wall, no wiser, as far as the object of our search was concerned, than when we turned out of Holborn.

Hatton Wall is by no means a nice place for a stranger to find himself blindly groping about on a dark February night; indeed, making an allowance of sixty per cent. for time and wealth, I should be inclined to say it was one of the ugliest, if not the most ugly, spots in London. There may be uglier. In one's peregrinations round about London you never know when you have arrived at the worst. I thought I had done so when I first beheld Neal's Buildings in Seven Dials, but was fain to acknowledge my error on an investigation of Brunswick Street, Ratcliffe Highway, and even this—the hideously-renowned Tiger Bay—must, as I afterwards discovered, knock under to Little Keate Street, Whitechapel. Yet it is hard to award the palm, the claim to the supremacy of ugliness being based each on different grounds. Neal's Buildings is nothing worse than the stronghold of Irish squalor, and all manner of filthiness and rags and

beggary. The women squat in groups on the squelchy pavement of Neal's Buildings on hot summer days, airily garbed, and with a toothed instrument of horn sleeking their golden tresses, and smoking stumpy pipes, and singing good old Irish songs, and holding cheerful converse with their male friends, some sprawled over the door thresholds, some lounging half out of first and second-floor windows, their shocks of fiery hair surmounted by a nightcap, and so full of gaping and yawning as to give rise to the suspicion that they are not yet entirely out of bed. Tiger Bay is less repulsive at first sight; indeed, it is only when night closes in, and the women, turned wild beasts, leave their lairs to prowl abroad and hunt for sailors, and the born whelps and jackals and hyenas in man shape congregate and lurk in washhouses and coal-holes, ready to pounce out on and beat and worry nigh to death the hapless wretch the females of their tribe have lured to the common den, that Brunswick Street appears uglier than its neighbour. Little Keate Street, again, taken as a street, is not particularly ill-looking; and the traveller might innocently enough take it as a promising short cut to eastern parts of the metropolis. Nevertheless it is a terrible street. It is from thence that the midnight burglar sallies with his little sack of 'tools' and his bits of wax candle and his lucifer matches and his life-preserver. These, however, are amongst the better sort of tenants inhabiting Keate Street—fellows who can pay their way handsomely, and being to a man liberal dogs—the stay of any poor wretch of their acquaintance who may stand in urgent need of assistance. Ask the shopkeepers of the neighbourhood—ask the butcher and the cheesemonger concerning his Keate Street customers! If they tell you as they told me when a year or so since it was my business to be making such inquiries, they will say that they live luxuriously. 'It's nothing, bless you,' said the butcher, 'for them to order a quarter of lamb—and that when it's a shilling a pound—as late as ten o'clock, to be

cooked that night for supper. They like their nick-nacks too, and often my boy is running all over the town to get them sweetbreads for breakfast.' 'You'd think, to stand a-top of the street and take a view of it both sides of the way, right to the bottom, that they wouldn't trouble me much except it was for butter-scrappings and bacon hocks and that sort of thing,' said the cheesemonger; 'Lor' bless you! It ain't single, no, nor yet double Glo'ster that'll do for 'em. It must be best Cheshire or none. Same with butter. Same with ham and eggs. The very best and never mind the price is their motto.' The ruffians of Keate Street, however, are not all of this superior order. The common pickpocket finds a home there, and the 'smasher,' and the area sneak, and the 'snow gatherer,' as the rascal who makes the thieving of linen his special study poetically styles himself; and, worse than all, a swarm of likely young fellows who as yet cannot lay claim to be called robbers, but who are satisfactorily progressing under the teaching of Moss Jacobs and Barney Davis. If roguery stands there would be no approaching Little Keate Street by a mile.

I should not like to say that Hatton Wall was, in a Keate Street sense, as ugly as Keate Street. I have not such great enmity against the organ grinders as to wish that it might be. To look at, however, it is uglier: a horribly dark, dingy, antiquated place, all gutter and cobble-stones, and smelling as strong of Irish as Neal's Buildings itself. The police, as we observed, went in pairs; and when *this* is the case in a neighbourhood, you may mark it as one in which it would be unsafe to openly consult your gold lever in order to ascertain the time. I ventured the insinuation that perhaps we had better retrace our steps, and come again some other night—some moonlight night, but our artist, who is as brave as he is big, at once taunted me with cowardice, and declared that since I had drawn him into the mess he would see the end of it, even though he searched every nook and alley in the place; and immediately proceeded to carry out

his valiant determination by inquiring of a little boy, that moment emerging from a scowling little public-house near Bleeding Hart Yard, hugging a gin bottle, whether he would be so obliging as to inform us where the organ men were to be found.

The little fellow replied that he was jiggered if he knew;—that they lived a'most anywhere about there, 'down here, mostly, and over there; and a good many up that there way, if you means their lodgings,' and he indicated 'down here' and 'over there' by pointing with his gin-bottle, and in the same manner gave us to understand which was 'that there way,' which was not at all an inviting way, being more dismal than any we had yet traversed, narrow, miry, and flanked on either side by little-windowed houses, tall, dingy, and mysterious-looking enough to be haunted—or at least in Chancery. However, it was the organ man's 'lodgings' that we did mean, and so we manfully struck into the unclean crevice, known as Little Saffron Hill.

But though we perambulated the dingy thoroughfare in the most careful manner, no organ man could we find either entering or emerging from his domicile. Once my companion thought that he descried the object of our pursuit ascending the steps of a distant house, and with a subdued exclamation of triumph he started off to see; in a few seconds, however, he returned disconsolate to report the mistaken figure a woman with a clothes-basket. At that instant, however, and while we were at a standstill, the lively notes of a polka suddenly greeted our ears, and eagerly following the welcome sound, we presently arrived at the house from whence it proceeded. It was a private house, quite an ordinary-looking habitation, with the same closed shutters and dingy door as the rest, and no more than the average amount of light glimmering through the chinks, to bespeak it a place of amusement. Still, however, as we stood and listened on the steps of the house, we were convinced that it must be. The polka ceased, and was instantly

followed by a jig in the same lively measure; moreover there was the hum of many voices, and the sounds of the shuffling of feet.

'It is a threepenny hop,—there can't be a doubt of it,' said we; and feeling in our pocket for the necessary entrance-money, we boldly pushed open the door and entered.

The passage was dark, but at the end of it there was a door of a room, in which there was evidently plenty of light, and in which, as we could now plainly make out, the music and dancing was. Without a moment's hesitation we stepped up to this door, as to the first, and pushed it open.

Our expectations, however, were not exactly realized. In an instant we found ourselves, not in a dancing-room but in a workshop—an establishment for the manufacture and repair of street organs. It was a small place, no bigger, probably, than an ordinary dining-room, but it was chokeful of organs, old and new,—stacked against the walls, on the floor, and on work-benches. Eight or ten bare-armed, bearded Italians were busy, patching, and polishing, and tinkering at the instruments. The jig tune that had attracted us was still proceeding as we entered, the organ from which it was produced standing on the ground, and the performer kneeling before it gravely grinding at the handle. It was the property, as it seemed, of an unmistakeable street grinder, who stood by, watching the music doctor as he examined the ailing organ, with as anxious and distressed a countenance as though it were nothing less precious than his eldest born brought to be tested on account of some suspected intestinal disorder.

Patchers, polishers, tinkers—even the man that was grinding the jig—paused in their various occupations and regarded us inquiringly. The situation was embarrassing, the more so that the door had slammed to, and we were shut in, and we laboured under the disadvantage of not knowing a word of the Italian tongue.

'*Vat you bisnias?*' demanded the street grinder, presuming on his

knowledge of our language to be spokesman.

We had no business—none, at least, that could be explained in an off-hand and satisfactory manner. My companion attempted the explanation, however.

'It's all right,' said he, with an insinuating little laugh—'it's a little mistake—we thought there was something going on—don't mind us.'

The organ grinder merely replied, 'Aha!' as far as we could make out; but, turning to the workmen, the traitorous villain must have altogether misinterpreted to them my companion's observation, for they rose, with warlike gestures and ejaculations, and turned as one man against us,—luckily, however, with so much noise that the proprietor of the premises, who was engaged in an adjoining apartment, was disturbed, and came hurriedly in to see what the row was about. He was a civil fellow, and listened with polite attention to what we had to say. His knowledge of English, however, could scarcely have been so 'perfect' as, at starting, he assured us it was; that is, judging from his answers.

'Oh yes! what you say is exact, gentlemen; but you cannot dance here for threepence or for any money. If you will dance, you must go to *Badessa*, or to *Sugar Loaf*, or to *Golden Anchor*. Good evening, gentlemen.' And he showed us to the door.

Although this little adventure could not be said to be in all respects gratifying, it was so in the main, inasmuch as it provided us with a clue. Clearly the places enumerated by the worthy organ builder were places of public entertainment—places where dancing was encouraged. Where was the *Golden Anchor*? Opportunely there came by a policeman.

'Keep straight on and cross the road, and it's the second public on the left.'

'It is a place where organ men assemble for their amusement, is it not?'

'You'll precious soon find the sort of place it is before you get within a dozen yards of it,' replied the po-

liceman. And so directed we once mere stepped out through the mire and the drizzling rain, with hope revived.

Since we paid a visit to the Golden Anchor, that hostel has earned for itself a hideous notoriety. Murder has been done there. At least that is how the law, misled by police pig-headedness and the reckless oath-taking of false witnesses, at first called it; but now, as it appears, the result of the bloody broil there enacted was merely a man slaughtered and not murdered—one man slaughtered and two or three others maimed and gashed and prodded! It was a pity that the disgraceful bungle was not completed by the hanging of an innocent man before Newgate. The Golden Anchor would have 'drawn' then with a vengeance, and done such a trade as never was the like; as it is the enterprising and conscientious landlord reaps little or no advantage from the perpetration in his house of the pretty little tragedy.

At the time we were in search of it, however, it had no special attraction; and it was not without some little difficulty that we discovered it—a low, broad house, gay with gas, clean looking, and standing at the corner of a lane leading to that dismal waste opposite the railway station in New Victoria Street, patronized by that miserable dreg of humanity, the betting blackguard. In the distance the house looked so quiet and decent that, despite the emblem of hope blazoned in gold above the doorway, we should have thought ourselves again at fault had it not been for the tokens the policeman had hinted at, and which were made known to us, not at one dozen yards' distance off, but at three at the very least.

It was not a sound of mirth, neither could it be mistaken for quarreling. It was an uproar composed of single ejaculations, delivered by many voices, and with a vehemence that was absolutely startling. It was as though a multitude of strong-lunged religious fanatics had seized on a victim and were, in set form, cursing him, dwelling with demoniac relish on each syllable of

the anathema, by way of transfixing the soul of the poor wretch with horror. At the same time there smote on the listening ear a hollow thumping noise that would well have passed as the rapping of poignard handles on the lid of an empty coffin.

Nor did a glimpse of the interior of the mysterious *caravanserai*, afforded by the swinging ajar of its centre door, do much toward dispelling the suspicion that some mystic and terrible ceremony was in progress within. There was to be seen a ferocious band seated about a long table, while one stood up in their midst, in a fiercely excited attitude, and continually raising both his clenched fists above his head, and bringing them down on to the table with a bang. And yet, marvel of marvels! the individual that opened the door was a little girl with a beer jug in her hand, and she went elbowing close by the fierce denouncer, with no more apparent concern than though he had been a peep-show man describing the wonders of his theatre. Surely where so helpless a creature went we might venture,—so in we went.

A glance explained the mystery. The bar was very long, and the space before it ample. There were butts and tables and forms in this space; and about the tables and the butts were grouped knots of Italians, young and old, playing at their national game of *moro*—a simple game enough, as the reader is perhaps aware; a sort of combination of the English boys' games of 'buck buck' and 'odds and evens,' the seated players watching the up-raised hands of 'buck,' and in their turn anticipating the number of fingers 'buck' intends displaying by the time his rapidly descending fists reach the table-top. In the hands of these Italians, however, it was a terrible game. With flashing eye and dishevelled hair, the callers, too eager to keep their seats, half rose and leant over the table, roaring out their guesses, with their noses nearly touching that of 'buck,'—the deep chest voices of the men, the high-pitched clamour of the lads, the laughter of the lucky

guessers, and the disappointed growls of the unlucky ones, blending to make a scene most bedlamitish. It seemed a conflict for blood rather than for beer. Nevertheless, they were a jolly, good-tempered crew enough; and as the games came to an end (there were at least half a dozen games in progress at the various tables), they came jovially to the bar and drank their liquor, with much joking and friendly shoulder-slapping. They paid down their losings, too, with the air of fellows who had spare sixpences to spend; indeed, they seemed to be so flush of money that we began to doubt if they could possibly be men who mucked up a day's earnings a halfpenny at a time by grinding at an organ, and took opportunity to ask the waiter (the poor wretch, probably, who afterwards was so nearly fatally stabbed in the stomach) if such were the case.

'They ain't all organ men,' he replied; 'some of 'em are picture-frame makers, and image-coves. They are about half organ men.'

'They seem to spend their money pretty freely.'

'So they ought; they earns enough.'

'What, the organ men?'

'Organ men, ah! A'pence tells up, don't yer know. They picks up a jolly sight more than me and you, as works hard for our livin'.'

There was nothing in the dress of the *moro* players to distinguish the organ grinder from his friend the 'image cove.' All were dressed alike—and very well dressed, after a style. More than anything they looked like a body of seafaring men—foreign sailors, recently paid off. Their long blue jackets were those of holiday-dressed sailors, as were their black satin waistcoats, their 'navy' caps, their pumps and their earrings, and their abundance of silver watch-guard. Moreover, most of them wore bright-coloured worsted comforters, as do foreign sailors invariably when dressed in their best and ashore. Altogether, their appearance was such as to entirely change one's views concerning the beggarly trade of organ grinding.

Meanwhile our friends carouse, and the *moro* players cluster thicker about the tables and butts, and the din becomes such that the tall and muscular landlord has to hold his hand to his ear that he may catch the orders of his customers. Suddenly, however, a sound of music is heard, and instantly there is a commotion amongst the players, and all but those who are in the middle of a game hurry towards a door at the end of a passage beside the bar. Joining the throng, we too approach the door and enter the room it opens into.

It is that to which the organ builder recommended us, 'if we must dance.' It is a spacious room, with bare, dirty walls, and scant of furniture as the casual ward of a workhouse. There is only one large table in the place, and a-top of that is mounted a hard-working grinder, in his every-day clothes, with his organ at his side, and labouring at the handle of it as stolidly, and with the same business air as though he were standing in the gutter in the Edgware Road. Amongst the throng that crowd the room he must recognize many friends—relatives, perhaps,—but he looks as unconcerned as a soldier on duty in a barrack-yard. Perhaps he would not get so many halfpence if he affected to regard his services as merely friendly.

As it is he does not fare badly. Between each polka and waltz he makes a significant pause, and the dancers fee him. There are female dancers as well as male; and, strangely enough, the females are not one of them Italian. They are chiefly English and Irish girls, working in the neighbourhood as looking-glass frame polishers. We were informed by one of the damsels in question that the Italians never bring their countrywomen with them to the dancing-room. Perhaps this may be accounted for on economical grounds; did they bring their countrywomen with them, they would naturally expect to be treated with some degree of generosity; whereas the grinder's treatment of his English or Irish partner was as shabby as can be well imagined,

her only reward being a pull at the pewter pot out of which he himself regaled. True, he did not ask much of her; indeed, his contract with her could scarcely be said to amount to a partnership, the dance being managed in this strange fashion:—Jacko and Antonio make up their minds for a dance, and select each a damsel; but Jacko and Antonio dance together, and the two damsels dance together alongside Jacko and friend. When the dance is over, Jacko orders four pen'north of beer, and the four divide it amongst them.

'Stingy beggars, arn't they?' whispered the damsel who had given us the bit of information concerning the organ man's peculiar method of dancing; 'thinks as much of a shilling as another man would of five. It ain't as though it was every night.'

'They don't come here every night in the week?'

'Bless you, no! a few on Mondays, sometimes, but nothing to speak of. Saturday night is their time—their time out, I mean: Sunday is their time at home.'

'Their time for what?—not dancing?'

'Dancing, no! no room for dancing, with twelve or fourteen of 'em in a bit of a back parlour. Drinking and cards and dominoes, that's what they get up to. Let 'em alone; they can come out strong enough amongst their own set. Plenty to eat and drink, plenty of rum, plenty of everything.'

'I shouldn't have thought that they earned sufficient money to indulge in such luxuries.'

'They don't earn it all: see what their wives earn at artificial-flower making and cigar-making.'

'Then they have pretty comfortable homes?'

'Well, comfortable as they look at it: you see, they are people of such strange ways: all for "clubbing." They club together to pay the rent of a room; to buy a joint of meat; for their beer, for their tobacco, for everything; eating and drinking and smoking together, a whole houseful of 'em, just as though they were all brothers and sisters. Plenty of everything, you know, but such a hugger-mugger.'

The young woman spoke as one that knew; and it was very much to our annoyance that, just at this moment, Jacko once more advanced towards her, and invited her to stand up and earn another drink of bad beer; and so we lost sight of her.

We had gleaned enough, one way and another, however, to convince us that Jacko makes a very decent livelihood out of his organ. He lives well, takes his amusement, has a bettermost suit of clothes, and a silver watch and chain.

'Which is crowning evidence,' triumphantly observes the grinder's champion, 'that the public are well disposed towards the poor fellow, that they appreciate his humble efforts to amuse them, and properly reward him.'

But isn't there another point of observation from which the flourishing grinder may be viewed? We humbly and hopefully think so. Assuming—and surely it is fair to assume—that at least half the grinder's gleanings accrue to him as 'smart money' to send him and his nuisance packing, our eyes are opened to the immense strength of this section of the army of opposition—a section more powerful than any other, and one that has only to vigorously assert itself, and the days of the organ monster's reign are numbered.

JAMES GREENWOOD.



ANECDOTE AND GOSSIP ABOUT CLUBS.

PART II.

THE 'Spectator,' who knew something about clubs, and indeed modestly surmised that his detractors had some colour for calling him the King of Clubs, has oracularly said that 'all celebrated clubs were founded on eating and drinking, which are points where most men agree, and in which the learned and the illiterate, the dull and the airy, the philosopher and the buffoon, can all of them bear a part.' But it is not every club that has avowed itself by its name or title as formed on this basis. Of course the father of Fielding's Squire Western would have no extra blush suffuse his fully pre-occupied cheek in announcing that October was a drink fit for the Jacobite gods of the fox-chase who liked to enjoy their *rus in urbe*, and to keep up the simplicity of their tastes during a temporary sojourn amongst the complexities of metropolitan society. There are two or three clubs, however, which declare their culinary basis with more straightforwardness than even the October did. Indeed it is only by supplying an ellipsis, and thinking of the pleasure and dignity of 'going to bed mellow,' that the name of the last can be brought into connection with anything eatable or drinkable. But about the Beef-steak Club, and the Kit-Kat Club there is no room for mistake. And of these we are about to record a few particulars. 'The Kit-Kat itself,' says Addison, in illustration of the proposition quoted from him a few lines above, 'is said to have taken its original from a Mutton-Pye. The Beef-steak and October Clubs, are neither of them averse to eating and drinking, if we may form a judgment of them from their respective titles.' The Beef-steak Club, thus alluded to, was founded in the Augustan reign of Anne; and was, as Chetwood's 'History of the Stage' informs us, 'composed of the chief wits and great men of the nation.' The badge of the club was a small gridiron of gold, worn suspended

from the neck by a green silk ribbon. Dick Estcourt, the player, was made *Providore* of the club. He was a man of infinite wit, amiability, and good manners. His name appears very frequently in the 'Spectator,' and always honourably. At one time Sir Roger de Coverley, addressing him from the country as 'old comical one,' acknowledges the safe arrival at Coverley of 'the hogsheads of neat Port,' and praises its qualities of hygiene and good-fellowship. 'Pray get a pure snug room,' proceeds the knight, 'and I hope next term to help fill your Bumper with our people of the Club; but you must have no bells stirring when the "Spectator" comes; I forbore ringing to Dinner while he was down with me in the country.' Estcourt at this time (1711), and for a few months after, was the landlord of a tavern called the Bumper, in Covent Garden. The 'Spectator' for Wednesday, August 27, of the following year, is devoted to the eulogy and lament with which Steele honoured the memory of this unrivalled companion. Confessing his obligations to his deceased friend for many hours of mirth and jollity, Steele particularizes those faculties the possession and the use of which had made Estcourt inimitable. His perception of incongruity was so subtle and delicate that he was a very arbiter of taste; and he had no less a profound and just sense of the beautiful. 'I dare say, there is no one who knew him well, but can repeat more well-turned compliments, as well as smart repartees, of Mr. Estcourt's than of any other man in England. This was easily to be observed in his inimitable faculty of telling a story, in which he would throw in natural and unexpected incidents to make his court to one part, and rally the other part of the company. Then he would vary the usage he gave them, according as he saw them bear kind or sharp language. He had the

knack to raise up a pensive temper, and mortify an impertinently gay one, with the most agreeable skill imaginable. There are a thousand things which crowd into my memory, which make me too much concerned to tell on about him.' His power of mimicry was matchless, and going further than the manner and the words into the very heart and thought of the person represented. His urbanity under the galling weight of a profession which subjected him to be called upon simply to amuse, when he had within him the consciousness of higher worth, was as great as ever it was in any man of like nature and genius under like circumstances. He was dreaded only by 'the vain, the formal, the proud, or those who were incapable of amending their faults; to others he was in the highest degree pleasing. * * *

It is to poor Estcourt I chiefly owe that I am arrived at the happiness of thinking nothing a diminution to me, but what argues a depravity of my will.' Further on, Sir Richard speaks of him as 'this extraordinary man, who, in his way, never had an equal in any age before him, or in that wherein he lived. I speak of him as a companion, and a man qualified for conversation.' He was without presumption; but he never forgot his own dignity, nor that of the guests whom he was called upon to entertain. 'I wish it were any honour,' Steele concludes, 'to the pleasant creature's memory that my eyes are too much suffused to let me go on—.' We trust that we have not sinned against the patience of the reader in dwelling thus far upon Dick Estcourt; the social idol of the 'Spectator' deserved a more than momentary or nominal mention. Ned Ward, in his 'Secret History of Clubs,' does not make such complimentary allusion to Estcourt or to the club of which he was so prominent an officer. According to Ward, the Club of Beef-eaters first established themselves 'at the sign of the Imperial Phiz, just opposite to a famous conventicle in the Old Jewry, a public-house that has long (1709) been eminent for the true British quin-

tescence of malt and hops, and a broiled sliver off the juicy rump of a fat well-fed bullock.' Here the 'superintendent of the kitchen was wont to provide several nice specimens of their beef-steak cookery, some with the flavour of a shalot or onion; some broiled, some fried, some stewed, some toasted, and others roasted, that every judicious member of the new-erected Club might appeal to his palate, and from thence determine whether the house they had chosen for their rendezvous truly deserved that public fame for their inimitable management of a bovinary sliver, which the world had given them.' Being satisfied on this point, they fixed their meetings to be continued weekly at the same place. Here, after a time, the boys of Merchant Taylors' School were accustomed to regale the club on its nights of meeting with uproarious shouts of 'Huzza—Beef-steak.' 'But the modest club, not affecting popularity, and choosing rather to be deaf to all public flatteries, thought it an act of prudence to adjourn from thence into a place of obscurity, where they might feast knuckle-deep in luscious gravy, and enjoy themselves free from the noisy addresses of the young scholastic rabble; so that now, whether they have healed the breach, and are again returned into the Kit-Cat community, from whence it is believed, upon some disgust, they at first separated, or whether, like the Calves' Head Club, they remove from place to place to prevent discovery, I sha'n't presume to determine; but at the present, like Oates's army of pilgrims, in the time of the plot, though they are much talked of, they are difficult to be found.'

The Beef-steak Society is not to be confounded with the Beef-steak Club; a designation which the former eschewed. We touch but lightly on the 'Sublime Society,' as a special paper in this number (see p. 282) is devoted to their history and doings.

Captain Morris, 'the Bard of the Beef-steak Society,' must not be omitted from our record, however slight. Charles Morris was born of good family in 1745, and appears to

have inherited a taste for lyric composition, for his father composed the popular song of 'Kitty Crowder.' For half a century Morris moved in the first circles of rank and gaiety: he was the 'Sun of the Table' at Carlton House, as well as at Norfolk House; and attaching himself politically as well as convivially to his table companions, he composed the celebrated ballads of 'Billy's too young to drive us' and 'Billy Pitt and the Farmer,' which were clever satires upon the ascendant politics of their day. His humorous ridicule of the Tories was, however, but ill repaid by the Whigs; at least, if we may trust the 'Ode to the Buff Waistcoat,' written in 1815. His 'Songs Political and Convivial,' many of which were sung at the Steaks' board, became very popular. In the decline of life and fortune, Morris was handsomely provided for by his fellow-Steak, the Duke of Norfolk, who conferred upon him a charming retreat at Brockham, in Surrey, which he lived to enjoy until the year 1838, surviving his benefactor by twenty-three years. He had taken leave of the Society, and voided his laureateship, however, in 1831, being then in his eighty-sixth year. The following is preserved as his valedictory poem:—

Adieu to the world! where I gratefully own,
Few men more delight or more comfort have
known;

To an age far beyond mortal lot have I trod
The path of pure health, that best blessing of
God;

And so mildly devout Nature tempered my
frame,

Holy patience still soothed when Adversity
came;

Thus with mind ever cheerful, and tongue
never tired,

I sung the gay strains these sweet blessings in-
spired;

And by blending light mirth with a moral-
mixt stave,

Won the smile of the gay and the nod of the
grave.

But at length the dull languor of mortal decay
Throws a weight on its spirit too light for its
clay;

And the fancy, subdued, as the body's oppress,
Resigns the faint flights that scarce wake in
the breast

A painful memento that man's not to play

A game of light folly through Life's sober day;

A just admonition, though viewed with regret,

Still blessedly offered, though thanklessly
met.

Too long, I perhaps, like the many who stray,
Have upheld the gay themes of the Baccha-
nal's day:

But at length Time has brought, what it ever
will bring,

A shade that excites more to sigh than to sing.
In this close of Life's chapter, ye high-

favoured few,

Take my Muse's last tribute—this painful
adieu!

Take my wish, that your bright social circle
on earth

For ever may flourish in concord and mirth;

For the long years of joy I have shared at
your board,

Take the thanks of my heart—where they
long have been stored;

And remember, when Time tells my last part-
ing knell,

The "old bard" dropped a tear, and then bade
ye—Farewell!

But he paid other honorary and poetical visits to his dear brethren and children of the Steaks at intervals in his remaining lifetime, always welcome, always jocund and gay and affectionate. Morris died at the patriarchal age of ninety-three, dying even then, as Curran said of him that he would, 'in his youth,' and only a few years after he had favoured a select number of friends by singing, to his own accompaniment on the pianoforte, the air of 'The Girl I left behind me,' in a bookseller's shop at Dorking.

The Beef-steak has conferred a designation upon other incorporations besides those we have mentioned—upon one, namely, which was established at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, in 1749, under the presidency of Mrs. Peg Woffington, the only lady admitted to its celebrations; on the club in Ivy Lane, in the classical neighbourhood of Newgate Market and Paternoster Row, of which Dr. Johnson was a member; on a political association called the Rump-steak, or Liberty Club, the members of which were in enthusiastic opposition to Sir Robert Walpole's administration; and on still another, instituted by Beard, Dunstall, Woodward, Gifford, and others, at the Bell Tavern, Church Row, Houndsditch. From this last circumstance let any curled darlings of fashion or of literature, on the look-out for a new sensation, and thinking, haply, of establishing a Beef-steak Club at the Toad-in-a Hole, Shadwell, be encouraged to

persevere. They are surely on the road to fame.

In glancing at the Beef-steak Club and Society, we have necessarily arrived at a point from which it becomes us to retrace our steps for nearly a couple of centuries, in order that we may enact the rhapsodist to the multiform glories of the Kit-Kat Club, formed about the year 1700, towards the latter end of the reign of King William III. The origin of its peculiar designation is variously accounted for. Pope, or Arbuthnot—for the authorship of the lines is unsettled—sings:—

Whence deathless Kit-Kat took its name,
Few critics can unriddle;
Some say from pastry-cook it came,
And some from Cat and Fiddle.

'From no trim beast (its name it boasts),
Grey statesmen or green wits;
But from the pell-mell pack of toasts
Of old cats and young kits.'

This epigrammatic derivation leads to the conclusion that it was named from its well-known custom of toasting ladies after dinner. The supposed sign of the Cat and Fiddle (Kitt), mentioned, to be discarded, in the foregoing lines, offers another solution. But there is a third, which—if we are not to suppose that the title was a haphazard one to which theories of its etymology were adapted, and which was retained on account of its singularity—is deserving of attention.

The Kit-Kat Club had their first assemblies at a house in Shire Lane, near Temple Bar, which was occupied by a pastrycook named Christopher Katt, famous for his skill in making mutton-pies, a dish from which the club itself, and the viand which formed the *pièce de résistance* at their entertainments, took its name.

'A Kit-Kat is a supper for a lord.'

says the prologue of a comedy of 1700; but Dr. King, as Mr. Timbs points out, is in favour of the pie-man. Says the Doctor, in his 'Art of Cookery'—

'Immortal made as Kit-Kat by his pies.'

'Ned Ward,' says Mr. Timbs, 'at once connects the Kit-Kat Club with

Jacob Tonson, "an amphibious mortal, chief merchant to the Muses." Yet this is evidently a caricature. The maker of the mutton-pies Ward maintains to be a person named Christopher, who lived at the sign of the Cat and Fiddle, in Gray's Inn Lane, whence he removed to keep a pudding-pye shop, near the Fountain Tavern, in the Strand. Ward commends his mutton-pies, cheese-cakes, and custards, and the pie-man's interest in the sons of Parnassus; and his inviting "a new set of Authors to a collation of oven trumpery at his friend's house, where they were nobly entertained with as curious a batch of pastry delicacies as ever were seen at the winding-up of a Lord Mayor's feast;" adding, that "there was not a mathematical figure in Euclid's Elements but what was presented to the table in baked wares, whose cavities were filled with fine eatable varieties fit for the gods or poets." Mr. Charles Knight, in the "Shilling Magazine," No. 2, maintains that by the above is meant, that Jacob Tonson, the bookseller, was the pie-man's "friend," and that to the customary "whet" to his authors he added the pastry entertainment. Ward adds, that this grew into a weekly meeting, provided his, the bookseller's, friends would give him the refusal of their juvenile productions. This "generous proposal was very readily agreed to by the whole poetic class, and the cook's name being Christopher, for brevity called Kit, and his sign being the Cat and Fiddle, they very merrily derived a quaint denomination from puss and her master, and from thence called themselves of the Kit-Cat Club."

The Kit-Kat was the great Whig club of Queen Anne's time, and at its commencement was composed of thirty-nine members, amongst whom were the Dukes of Marlborough, Grafton, Devonshire, Richmond, and Somerset; the Earls of Dorset, Sunderland, Manchester, Wharton, and Kingston; Lords Halifax and Somers; Sir Robert Walpole, Vanbrugh, Congreve, Granville, Addison, Maynwaring, Garth, Stepney, and Walsh. In later days it num-

bered the greatest wits of the age among its members.

The Club subscribed in 1709 the sum of four hundred guineas for the encouragement of good comedies, and is also famous for the encouragement it extended to art. Pope writes to Spence: 'You have heard of the Kit-Cat Club. The master of the house where the club met was Christopher Katt; Tonson was secretary.' * * * Jacob (i.e., Tonson) has his own and all their pictures, by Sir Godfrey Kneller. Each member gave his, and he is going to build a room for them at Barn Elms.' These portraits were all of one size, thirty-six inches by twenty-eight; and the name of the Club has been thence used extensively to designate pictures of these dimensions.

The Club held its summer meetings at the Upper Flask, Hampstead Heath.

But the culminating glory of the Kit-Kat, after its political, literary, and artistic characteristics have been duly honoured, was in its spirit of gallantry. It was still the custom, at the time of its institution, to call upon the name of some fair maiden, and chaunt her praises over the cup as it passed. The Kit-Kat reduced this custom into a system; and every member was compelled to name a beauty, whose claims to the distinction of being a toast of the Club were then discussed; and if her charms were conspicuous enough to give her victory in such an ordeal, a separate bowl was dedicated to her worship, and verses to her honour were engraven upon it. Some of the most celebrated of the toasts had their pictures hung up in the club-room; and to be the favourite of the Kit-Kat was an object of no small ambition. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had attained this distinction at the ripe age of eight years. Lord Dorchester, her father, afterwards Duke of Kingston, gave on one occasion 'the pretty little child' for his toast; but the other members, who had not seen the young aspirant, demurred to her canonization until her presence had been secured by her father. When the

little beauty was produced, however, all disaffection and all objections at once were slain, and she was passed from member to admiring member, from knee to dandling knee. Another celebrated toast of the Kit-Kat, mentioned by Walpole, was Lady Molyneux, who, he says, died smoking a pipe. Other favourites were Lady Godolphin, Lady Sunderland, Lady Bridgewater, and Lady Monthermer, all daughters of the Duke of Marlborough; the Duchesses of Bolton, St. Alban's, Richmond, and Beaufort; Mrs. Barton, the friend of Swift, and niece of Sir Isaac Newton, and other ladies too numerous to mention.

The poet of the Kit-Kat, *par excellence*, was Sir Samuel Garth, the physician and friend of Marlborough, with whose sword he was knighted by King George I. He is poetically known in these days chiefly by his 'Dispensary,' a satire upon the apothecaries. He was a jovial member, and a witty man. One night, being at the Club, and in love with the wine and the company, he had completely forgotten the fifteen patients whose names appeared on his list of the day, but whom he had so far left unvisited. When it had become too late to call upon them, he excused himself to his brethren of the Kit-Kat by declaring that it was no great matter whether he saw them that night or not, 'For nine of them,' said he, 'have such bad constitutions, that all the physicians in the world can't save them; and the other six have such good constitutions that all the physicians in the world can't kill them.' The *laissez-faire* of such a speech it would be difficult to beat.

Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, was the Mæcenas of his day, whom Pope described in the character of Bufo.

Proud as Apollo, on his forked hill,
Sat full-blown Bufo, puffed by every quill;
Fed with soft dedications all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.

But Bufo would himself enjoy the honours of a poet; and his claim to this character reposes in part on the verses which he wrote for the toasting-glasses of the Kit-Kat Club in

1703. The following are two or three of them:—

DUCHESS OF ST. ALBAN'S.

'The line of Vere, so long renown'd in arms,
Concludes with lustre in St. Alban's charms.
Her conquering eyes have made their race
complete;

'They rose in valour, and in beauty set.'

LADY MARY CHURCHILL.

'Patrest and latest of the beauteous race,
Illust with your parent's wit, and her first
blooming face;

Born with our liberties in William's reign,
Your eyes alone that liberty restrain.'

DUCHESSE OF RICHMOND.

'Of two fair Richmonds different ages boast,
Theirs was the first, and ours the brightest
toest;

'The adorers' offerings prove who's most
divine,
They sacrificed in water, we in wine.'

Besides the illustrious Club of which he was a member, the 'Spectator' has registered societies of nearly every conceivable degree of eccentricity, and where he could not discover, has pleasantly invented or caricatured. We propose to follow his guidance for a few pages, either when he deals with what are professedly historical clubs, or when he celebrates the laws and usages of what Mr. Bright, in a facetious mood, might, if he pleased, designate the 'Spectator's' 'fancy' clubs. We may, in encountering these last, be pretty sure that they have a certain degree of verisimilitude; and if their titles and objects are obnoxious to ridicule, it is tolerably manifest that they are the portraits in distemper of other societies whose bonds of brotherhood were scarcely less ridiculous than these clubs of the imagination. When we hear a man's nose hyperbolically measured by the foot, we may take our oath that that imposing feature is at least a hair's breadth more developed than that of ordinary people. Ridicule itself can flourish only as it is nourished by truth and as it is in some way or other evolved from it. Be thy spirit with us, oh most eloquent of the 'sons of silence'; and may our silver speech grow ruddy whilst we sojourn within the sparkle of thy gold!

'Every one,' says the 'Spectator,' 'has heard of the Club, or rather the

confederacy, of the Kings. This grand Alliance was formed a little after the return of King Charles II., and admitted into it men of all qualities and professions, provided they agreed in this surname of King, which, as they imagined, sufficiently declared the owner of it to be altogether untainted with republican and anti-monarchical principles.' Another Club, founded on the Christian name common to its members, was that of the Georges, which held its meetings at the sign of the George on St. George's day, and the pet characteristic oath of which was, *Before George!*

There was in the days of the Merry Monarch a Club of Duellists, of which every member had called out his man, and the president of which had approved his valour by killing half a dozen in single combat. The other members took their seats according to the number of their slain. At a side table were ranged those who had only drawn blood, and who were therefore reckoned as acolytes or postulants. This Club owed its dissolution to a majority of its members being cut off by the sword or the executioner, not long after its institution. Verily, of Clubs, as of individuals, it may be said, 'Whom the gods love, die young.'

In a certain market town, which for reasons of delicacy the 'Spectator' does not name, we hear of a Club of Fat Men, who, superior to the charms of sprightliness and wit, met only with the benevolent idea of keeping each other in countenance. Two doors of different dimensions opened into their room of meeting; and if a candidate stuck fast in his endeavour to enter by the smaller, he was brought round to the larger, by which he entered to be saluted as a brother. This Club, as the 'Spectator' heard, 'though it consisted of but fifteen people, weighed above three ton.'

The Society met with an ill-natured opposition from the Club of Scarecrows and Skeletons, who represented their well-conditioned foes as persons of dangerous principles, and sought to deprive them of the magistracy on this plea.

The Clubs thus became factions, and rent for a while the society of the town; till a truce was concluded, in virtue of which each of the two Clubs elected one of the two bailiffs of the town, 'by which means the principal magistrates are at this day coupled like rabbits, one fat and one lean.'

The Humdrum Club and the Mum Club were societies for the encouragement of silence, where honest gentlemen of pacific dispositions sat together smoking, meditating, and saying nothing, till midnight. The Twopenny Club was an institution of artisans and mechanics, whose laws, as giving 'a pretty picture of low life,' the 'Spectator' was at the pains to transcribe from the wall of the little alehouse where was their rendezvous. The curious reader may find them in the number for Saturday, March 10, 1711.

Mr. Alexander Carbuncle, writing from Oxford, gives a humorous account of a certain Club which had been instituted in his University. Remarking on the prevalence of such hebdomadal societies as the Punning Club, the Witty Club, and the Handsome Club, he proceeds to inform the 'most profound' Mr. Spectator of a Society which had been incorporated in burlesque of the last, and which had the generous audacity to call itself the Ugly Club. It consisted of a President and twelve fellows, who were eligible according to certain statutes entitled 'The Act of Deformity.' Of this code Mr. Carbuncle is kind enough to volunteer a clause or two:—

'I. THAT no Person whatsoever shall be admitted without a visible Quearity in his Aspect, or peculiar Cast of Countenance, of which the President and Officers for the time being are to determine, and the President to have the casting Voice.

'II. THAT a singular Regard be had, upon Examination, to the Gibbosity of the Gentlemen that offer themselves, as Founders' Kinsmen; or to the Obliquity of their Figure, in what sort soever.

'III. THAT if the Quantity of any Man's Nose be eminently mis-calculated, whether as to Length or

Breadth, he shall have a just Pretence to be elected.

'Lastly, THAT if there shall be two or more Competitors for the same Vacancy, *ceteris paribus*, he that has the thickest Skin to have the Preference.

'EVERY fresh Member, upon his first Night, is to entertain the Company with a Dish of Cod-fish, and a Speech in Praise of *Æsop*; whose Portraiture they have in full Proportion, or rather Disproportion, over the Chimney; and their Design is, as soon as their Funds are sufficient, to purchase the Heads of *Thersites*, *Duns Scotus*, *Scarron*, *Hudibras*, and the old Gentleman in *Oldham*, with all the celebrated ill Faces of Antiquity, as Furniture for the Club Room.'

Although the Club threw open its privileges to lady aspirants, no candidate of the gentler sex had offered herself, up to the date of Mr. Carbuncle's letter, although that gentleman did not yet despair of female recruits. The motto of the Society seems to have been: 'Le beau, c'est le laid.' It encouraged the poetry of ugliness. A Mrs. Touchwood, upon the loss of her two fore-teeth, became the subject of a congratulatory ode; and Mrs. Vizard, having been extensively manipulated by the small-pox, and so rendered reasonably ugly, became 'a top toast in the Club.' The 'Spectator,' whose face was not quite so long as it was broad, had the touching honour of being admitted 'informis societatis socius' on the strength of his own testimonial, and without previous personal examination. The recipient of so delicate and singular a distinction was not a little sensible of the favour, stamping as it did the Club's approval at once of his deformity and veracity.

But his measure of gratification was not yet filled. A month or two after, he was invited to be admitted *ad eundem* in a like corporation, the Club of Ugly Faces, established at the sister university. The Oantab who conveyed this invitation is jealous for the honour of his *alma mater*, and argues for the superior antiquity of his Club over

that of the Oxford one, the former having been originally instituted, as he says, with an air of most innocent mystery, 'in the merry reign of K—g Ch—les II.' The Cambridge man's letter would indicate that his Society were not all volunteers, and enlarges upon the subterfuges to which the modesty of proposed members drove them to escape from the eminence and responsibility of its fellowship. This comparative reluctance to identify themselves willingly with ugliness would appear to have been discriminative of the Cantabs, who some years after instituted a Club, confined to themselves, called the Beautiful. The 'Athenæum' says that 'the members—men, of course—painted dimples on their cheeks, if they did not already possess them! This was at least reported. This Club held that the neckcloth made the man. One of the members is said to have remarked, "When I undress at night it is like heaven! But a man must suffer in order to be captivating!"' The poor fellow is to be pitied for his torture; but Narcissus and Adonis, our faithful readers, to whom Nature has been more bountiful, will hardly recognise the necessity which mastered him. And that the present writer may venture to combine comfort with elegance may be pretty well inferred from the fact that our travelling passport last year described our face with not less poetry than precision, as offering a fair idea of Apollo in his better days—when, that is, his face had become a little bearded, and dashed with a portion of the severer dignity of Jove. Let us be humble, my brothers.

The Cambridge correspondent triumphantly—to himself, at least—vindicating the antiquity of his own Ugly Faces over the Ugly Club of Oxford, assured the 'Spectator' that the former were of coeval date with the 'Lowngers,' a Club of 'the same standing with the University itself.' The Lowngers were a sect of Philosophers who bore an external and nominal resemblance to the Peripatetics of old, but who did not slavishly imitate the latter in such minor matters as studious specula-

tion and the imparting or the acquirement of instruction. There seems to have been something, indeed, about their lofty indifference to the gravest sublunary things which argued an Oriental genealogy. One of their grand crusades was against Time, who, as a general foe and destroyer, they voted ought to be himself destroyed and murdered without mercy. Cowley, who was once of Trinity College, Cambridge, may possibly have belonged to this venerable fraternity, if we may trust the following eloquent lines of his 'Complaint':—

'Business! the frivolous pretence
Of human lusts to shake off innocences;
Business! the grave impertinence;
Business! the thing which I of all things hate;
Business! the contradiction of thy fate.'

These lines are presumably a poetic rendering of a maxim of the Lowngers, 'that Business was designed only for Knaves, and study for Blockheads.' The more accomplished of these philosophers of negation would contemplate a sun-dial for several consecutive hours; less advanced fellows would find their attempts at attaining the supreme indifference they cultivated diverted by street signs and shop windows, by the news that a butcher had relieved a calf from its burden of mortality, or that a cat had added a batch of kittens to the population of a mews. The speculative reader may profitably compare with these western philosophers the Nihilists of the farther East, and the fourteenth century Omphalopsychites or Umbilicani of Mount Athos.

The Amorous Club was another Society which had its head-quarters at Oxford. The members were all in love; and by their rules were obliged to celebrate the objects of their affections in becoming verse. No man was thought good company at its convivial meetings who did not sigh five times in a quarter of an hour; and every member was reckoned very absurd if he was so self-contained as to return a direct answer to any question. 'In fine, the whole assembly was made up of absent men, that is, of such persons as had lost their locality, and whose

minds and bodies never kept company with one another.'

The Amorous Club was an association of men who were allowed some pretensions to intellect, but in whom this was dominated by the heart. But the Fringe-Glove Club, a metropolitan institution of feeble imitators, was simply a refuge for the destitute, who, having no store of brains to furnish expressions for their passion, vented it all on their dress, which was calculated to show them visibly to the world as lovers. They were such fool—ish persons, as Mr. Carlyle would compassionately call them, even before their wits had been impaired by the intensity of their affections, that 'their irregularities could not furnish sufficient variety of folly to afford daily new impertinences.' This paucity of invention was in the end the death of the society.

The Everlasting Club is worthy of being described in the 'Speculator's' own words. In his number for Wednesday, March 23, 1711, he says: 'A friend of mine complaining of a Tradesman who is related to him, after having represented him as a very idle, worthless Fellow, who neglected his Family, and spent the most of his time over a Bottle, told me, to conclude his Character, that he was a member of the *Everlasting Club*. So very odd a Title raised my Curiosity to inquire into the Nature of a Club that had such a sounding Name; upon which my friend gave me the following Account:

'THE *Everlasting Club* consists of a hundred Members, who divide the whole twenty-four Hours among them in such a manner, that the Club sits Day and Night from one end of the Year to the other; no Party presuming to rise till they are relieved by those who are in course to succeed them. By this means a Member of the *Everlasting Club* never wants company; for tho' he is not upon Duty himself, he is sure to find some who are; so that if he be disposed to take a Whet, a Nooning, an Evening's draught, or a Bottle after Midnight, he goes to the Club, and finds a knot of Friends to his Mind.

'It is a Maxim in this Club That the Steward never dies; for as they succeed each other by way of Rotation no man is to quit the great Elbow-chair which stands at the upper End of the Table, till his Successor is in Readiness to fill it, inasmuch that there has not been a *Sede vacante* in the Memory of Man.

'THIS Club was instituted towards the End (or as some of them say, about the Middle) of the Civil Wars, and continued without Interruption till the Time of the *Great Fire*, which burnt them out, and dispersed them for several Weeks. The Steward at that time maintained his Post till he had like to have been blown up with a neighbouring House (which had been demolished in order to stop the Fire); and would not leave the Chair at last, till he had emptied all the Bottles upon the Table, and received repeated Directions from the Club to withdraw himself. This Steward is frequently talked of in the Club and looked upon by every Member of it as a greater Man than the famous Captain mentioned in my Lord Clarendon, who was burnt in his Ship because he would not quit it without Orders. He said that towards the Close of 1700, being the Great Year of Jubilee, the Club had it under Consideration whether they should break up or continue their Session; but after many Speeches and Debates, it was at length agreed to sit out the other Century. This Resolution passed in a general Club, *Nemine Contradicente*.

'HAVING given this short Account of the Institution and Continuation of the *Everlasting Club*, I shall here endeavour to lay something of the Manners and Characteristics of its several Members, which I shall do according to the best Lights I have received in this Matter.

'It appears by their Books in general, that since their first Institution they have smoked Fifty Tun of Tobacco, drunk thirty thousand Butts of Ale, One Thousand Hogsheads of Red Port, Two Hundred Barrels of Brandy, and a Kilderkin of Small Beer. There has likewise been a great Consumption of Cards. It is also said that they observe the Law in Ben Jonson's Club, which orders

the Fire to be always kept in (*focus perennis esto*) as well for the convenience of lighting their Pipes, as to cure the dampness of the Club-Room. They have an Old Woman in the nature of a Vestal, whose Business it is to cherish and perpetuate the Fire, which burns from Generation to Generation, and has seen the Glass-house Fires in and out above an Hundred times.

'THE *Everlasting Club* treats all other Clubs with an Eye of Contempt, and talks even of the *Kit-Kat* and *October* as a couple of Upstarts. Their ordinary Discourse (as much as I have been able to learn it) turns altogether upon such Adventures as have passed in their own Assembly; of Members who have taken the glass in their turn for a week together, without stirring out of the Club; of others who have smoked an hundred Pipes at a Sitting; of others who have not missed their Morning's Draught for twenty years together. Sometimes they speak in raptures of a Run of Ale in *King Charles's* Reign, and sometimes reflect with astonishment upon games of Whist which have been miraculously recovered by Members of the Society, when in all human probability the case was desperate.

'THEY delight in several old Catches, which they sing at all Hours to encourage one another to moisten their Clay, and grow immortal, by drinking, with many other edifying Exhortations of like nature.

'THERE are four general Clubs held in a Year, at which Times they fill up Vacancies, appoint Waiters, confirm the old Fire-Maker or elect a new one, settle Contributions for Coals, Pipes, Tobacco, and other Necessaries.

'THE Senior Member has lived the whole Club twice over, and has been drunk with the Grandfathers of some of the present sitting Members.'

The title of the preceding Club has a sort of affinity with that of the *Last Man Club*, which, beginning with a certain number of members, was never to admit a new one. A bottle of port wine was sealed up in the room in which they assembled, and when only one member survived it was to fall to him to sit

in the room and drink the wine to the memory of the dead! It is said, however, that when only two members survived, they met and emptied the magnum between them. Poor fellows! neither of them dared to face the notion of the ghostly solitude in reserve for the longest liver.

He would be doing a pleasant and benevolent service to 'London Society' who would, in the spirit of Gay, sing a new '*Trivia*, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London,' adapted to the peculiar trials and crosses of the current year. Since the 'stamping out' of the garotte, the slaughter of human beings in the streets of the metropolis—a branch of industry which is carried on at the rate of 313 annually, in leap year 314, being one death for each day in the year, exclusive of Sunday, which is generally a day of rest in this profession—has been confined to draymen, carters, and cab-drivers. But early in the last century, when Gay wrote the '*Trivia*' referred to, there were nightly perils to life and limb arising not only from professional plunderers and murderers, but from young dissipated bloods and rakes who incorporated themselves in clubs for the prosecution of amateur violence. To slit noses, to crop ears, to gouge out eyes, to roll ladies in barrels down Snow Hill, and other amenities of a like nature, were their ordinary exploits. In the third part of the '*Trivia*,' which exhibits rules for the safe and commodious traverse of the streets by night, Gay thus advises his reader—

'Where Lincoln's Inn, wide space, is raised
around,
Cross not with venturous step; there oft is
found
The lurking thief, who while the daylight
abode
Made the walls echo with his begging tone:

That crutch, which late compassion moved,
shall wound
Thy bleeding head, and fell thee to the
ground.
Though thou art tempted by the Hinkman's
call,
Yet trust him not along the lonely wall;
In the midway he'll quench the flaming brand,
And share the booty with the pilfering band.
Still keep the public streets, where oily rays,
Shot from the crystal lamp, o'erspread the
ways.'

And again—

'Now is the time that rakes their revels keep;
Kindlers of riot, enemies of sleep.
His scattered pence the flying Nicker flings,
And with the copper shower the casement
rings.

Who has not heard the Scowerer's midnight
fame?

Who has not trembled at the Mohock's name?
Was there a watchman took his hourly rounds,
Safe from their blows, or new-invented
wounds?

I pass their desperate deeds, and mischiefs done,
Where from Snowhill black steepy torrents
run;

How matrons, hooped within the hoghead's
womb,

Were tumbled furious thence; the rolling
tomb

O'er the stones thunders, bounds from side to
side:

So Regulus to save his country died.'

With such perils to encounter from truculent fops and fools on the one hand, and from professional marauders on the other—not to mention the ill-lit, half-paved, mud-drenched condition of the thoroughfares—it is not wonderful that the graver Londoner found it advisable to shorten the distance between his home and his club as much as possible. This led to the formation of what were called Street Clubs, where the householder or inhabitant of a particular street would be able to enjoy the society of his neighbours at a tavern within easy reach of his dwelling. To such a club the 'Spectator' whimsically refers: 'There are,' he says, 'at present in several Parts of this City what they call *Street-Clubs*, in which the chief Inhabitants of the Street converse together every night. I remember, upon my enquiring after Lodgings in *Ormond Street*, the Landlord, to recommend that Quarter of the Town, told me, there was at that time a very good Club in it; he also told me, upon further Discourse with him, that two or three noisive Country Squires, who were settled there the Year before, had considerably sunk the Price of House-Rent; and that the Club (to prevent the like Inconveniences for the future) had Thoughts of taking every House that became vacant into their own Hands, till they had found a Tenant for it, of a sociable Nature and good Conversation.'

Gay has mentioned the Nicker, the Scowerer, and the Mohock amongst those who made the night of London hideous. 'But it had been for many previous years the favourite amusement of dissolute young men to form themselves into Clubs and Associations for committing all sorts of excesses in the public streets, and alike attacking orderly pedestrians and even defenceless women. These Clubs took various slang designations. At the Restoration they were "Mums" and "Tityre-tus." They were succeeded by the "Hectors" and "Scourers," when, says Shadwell, "a man could not go from the Rose Tavern to the Piazza once but he must venture his life twice." Then came the "Nickers," whose delight it was to smash windows with showers of halfpence; next were the "Hawk-abites;" and lastly, the "Mohocks."

The last are described by a correspondent of the 'Spectator' as 'a set of men (if you will allow them a place in that Species of Being) who have lately [1712] erected themselves into a Nocturnal Fraternity under the title of the *Mohock-Club*, a Name borrowed it seems from a sort of *Cannibals* in *India*, who subsist by plundering and devouring all the Nations about them. The President is styled *Emperor of the Mohocks*; and his arms are a *Turkish Crescent*, which his Imperial Majesty bears at present in a very extraordinary manner engraven on his Forehead. Agreeable to their Name, the avowed design of their Institution is *Mischief*; and upon this Foundation all their Rules and Orders are framed. An outrageous Ambition of doing all possible hurt to their Fellow-Creatures, is the great Cement of their Assembly, and the only Qualification required in the Members. In order to exert this Principle in its full Strength and Perfection, they take care to drink themselves to a pitch, that is, beyond the Possibility of attending to any Motions of Reason or Humanity; then make a general Sally, and attack all that are so unfortunate as to walk the Streets through which they patrol. Some are knocked down, others stabbed, others cut and carbonadoed. To

put the Watch to a total Rout, and mortify some of those inoffensive Militia, is reckoned a *Coup d'éclat*. The particular Talents by which these Misanthropes are distinguished from one another, consist in the various kinds of Barbarities which they execute upon their Prisoners. Some are celebrated for a happy dexterity in tipping the Lion upon them; which is performed by squeezing the Nose flat to the Face, and boring out the Eyes with their Fingers. Others are called the Dancing-Masters, and teach their Scholars to cut Capers by running Swords through their Legs; a new Invention, whether originally *French* I cannot tell. A third sort are the Tumblers, whose office it is to set Women on their heads and commit certain Barbarities on their limbs. But these I forbear to mention, because they cannot but be shocking to the Reader as well as the SPECTATOR.

In addition to the Lion-Tippers, the Dancing-Masters, and the Tumblers, there was another species of the genus Mohock called the Sweaters. 'It is, it seems, the Custom for half a dozen, or more, of these well-disposed Savages, as soon as they have enclosed the Person upon whom they design the favour of a Sweat, to whip out their Swords, and holding them parallel to the Horizon, they describe a sort of Magic Circle round about him with the Points. As soon as this Piece of Conjurat[i]on is performed, and the Patient without doubt already beginning to wax warm, to forward the Operation, that Member of the Circle, towards whom he is so rude as to turn his Back first, runs his Sword directly into that Part of the Patient wherein School-boys are punished; and as it is very natural to imagine this will soon make him tack about to some other Point, every Gentleman does himself the

same justice as often as he receives the Affront. After this Jig has gone two or three times round, and the Patient is thought to have sweat sufficiently, he is very handsomely rubbed down by some Attendants, who carry with them Instruments for that purpose, and so di-charge d.'

To allay the panic which the publication of such particulars was calculated to provoke, it was contended on the other hand that the Mohocks had only an imaginary existence, and were 'like those spectres and apparitions which frighten several towns and villages in her Majesty's dominions, though they were never seen by any of the inhabitants. Others are apt to think that these Mohocks are a kind of bull-beggars, first invented by prudent married men and masters of families, in order to deter their wives and daughters from taking the air at unreasonable hours; and t'at when they tell them *the Mohocks will catch them*, it is a caution of the same nature with that of our forefathers, when they bid their children have a care of raw-head and bloody-bones.'

Whether or not the Mohocks were such creatures of the imagination, the Temple—if the 'Guard an' of March 24, 1713, be not scandalous—had the merit of furnishing to their ranks a considerable portion of their recruits. And, at any rate, their name was enough to occasion some trepidation to that mirror of knighthood, Sir Roger de Coverley, during his occasional sojourns in town. Swift, also, for fear of receiving any delicate attention at their hands, was accustomed to disburse the hire of a coach, when he would otherwise have saved the expense by walking. 'They go on still,' [in spite of a royal proclamation] he says, 'and cut people's faces every night! but they shan't cut mine; I like it better as it is.'

(To be continued.)



despair because he had thrown the popular idol (Kelly) overboard, and was looking for his model to the dramatists of the past age—when, as he wrote in his Preface, 'little more was desired by an audience than nature and humour, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous.' Their fears were in a great measure justified. The play was but moderately successful. Audiences preferred Kelly and his 'genteel comedy' of 'False Delicacy'—now, happily, utterly dead and forgotten—and pronounced Goldsmith's humour 'low.' Johnson, however, championed the 'Good-natured Man' nobly. He wrote the prologue, which was spoken by Bensley, attended the rehearsal, was present with Burke on the first night, and praised the play as the best comedy that had appeared since the 'Provoked Husband.' There had been of late, he said, no such character exhibited on the stage as that of Croaker, and, 'Sir,' continued he, 'there is all the difference in the world between characters of nature and characters of manners. . . . Characters of manners are very entertaining; but they are to be understood by a more superficial observer than characters of nature, where a man must dive into the recesses of the human heart.'

Praise like this was exactly what Goldsmith needed under his disappointment. 'To delineate character of this kind,' he declared in his Preface, 'was his principal aim;' and it was this that Johnson, first of critics as he held him to be, had at once pronounced to be the distinctive feature of the play; that which rendered it the best comedy of the age, and for the perception of which a man must dive into the recesses of the human heart. Yes; this last touch must have thoroughly satisfied 'our little bard.' The well-known phrase belongs to this comedy: Johnson had so designated him in the Prologue, but, finding it touched his sensitive feelings, altered it to 'our anxious bard.' Goldsmith not only enjoyed praise but knew how to distinguish that which was really appreciative; and Johnson's commendations, we may be sure,

helped him to bear the public's coldness, perhaps even to make that odd-sounding acknowledgment in the Preface, that 'upon the whole, the author returns his thanks to the public for the favourable reception which the "Good-natured Man" has met with.'

What he could do in comedy was only fairly shown in 'She Stoops to Conquer,' produced five years later; but the 'Good-natured Man,' though the plot is far from feasible, and the way in which the incidents are developed is often quite absurd, is full of charming passages, and surcharged with buoyant humour. The author seems to be bubbling over with that kindly wit, that genial vivacity and native tenderness and delicacy which are the perennial charm of his Vicar, but which were an utter novelty in the comedies of his time, or even in those which he had taken as his model.

The scene which Mr. Frith has represented is laid in Honeywood's house. The heedless young spendthrift has been arrested for debt, and Miss Richland, who is ardently attached to him, having heard a rumour of the misadventure, determines to call upon him, avowedly to thank him for 'choosing her little library,' but really to ascertain whether the report is true—she having, however, first directed her lawyer to pay his debts. Honeywood in his perplexity, as the bailiffs will not, of course, suffer him out of their sight, determines to introduce them to the lady as his friends. He has already bribed them to be on their best behaviour 'in case company comes,' and he now directs his servant to detain Miss Richland for a moment whilst the worst clad of the two dons his blue and gold suit, 'the first that comes to hand.'

Probably, at the first glance, most who look at the picture with a tall a critical eye, fancy that Mr. Frith has exaggerated the vulgar obsequiousness of one and the coarser brutality of the other bailiff. But exaggeration and coarseness are not faults into which Mr. Frith is often (if ever) betrayed; and a cursory examination of the play will show that he has not so erred here. The



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[See "Artist's Notes from Choice Pictures."

bailliffs are thorough jail-birds—caricatures of the class we should have supposed them to be had any one else so represented them; but Goldsmith unluckily knew the sort of men only too well, and he has evidently drawn them carefully, and was rather proud than otherwise of the portraiture. His compatriots indeed judged otherwise. On the first night, the bailiff scene nearly proved fatal to the piece. Afterwards, as the author tells us, 'in deference to the public taste, grown of late, perhaps, too delicate, the scene of the bailiffs was retrenched in the representation.' He, however, thought too well of it to let it be lost; and so when he printed the play, for his own satisfaction, and 'in deference also to the judgment of a few friends, who think in a particular way,' the scene was restored. 'The author,' he continues, 'submits it to the reader in his closet; and hopes that too much refinement will not banish humour and character from ours, as it has already done from the French theatre.' The reader in his closet will certainly thank him for having restored a scene so essential to the development of the story, and which undoubtedly contains both humour and character in a marked degree, whilst all who see this picture may thank him for an additional pleasure, however unintended or unanticipated by the author.

As the 'Good-natured Man' is essentially a comedy of humour and character, Mr. Frith must be held to have succeeded or failed—apart from and antecedently to his technical failure or success—in proportion as he has appreciated the subtler humour of the scene and delineated the character of the actors in it: by no means an easy task for a painter. The chief personages are Honeywood, Miss Richland, and the bailiffs; let us look at them in succession.

Honeywood, the Good-natured Man of the comedy, is an open-hearted, generous young fellow—'immensely good-natured,' as Lofty sneeringly remarks—with 'that easiness of disposition which, though inclined to be right, had not courage to condemn the wrong;' who, consequently, was easily led into debt and difficulty,

and whose errors were the 'errors of a mind that only sought applause from others.' 'Splendid errors,' Goldsmith makes the good uncle, Sir William Honeywood, call them; 'splendid errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty—charity, that was but injustice; benevolence, that was but weakness, and friendship but credulity.' Goldsmith in drawing this amiable, unselfish, affectionate, but too docile character, was, one cannot but feel, painting from the life—himself the sitter. Only the genius is wanting to make the portrait complete.

Miss Richland appears in the play only when her presence is absolutely required. She is the favourite of every one, including the author. 'The most lovely woman that ever warmed the human heart,' and Goldsmith has done his best to credit her with intellect as well as beauty. Even her maid, Garnet—herself an eminently shrewd body—wondered how 'so innocent a face could cover so much cuteness.'

The bailiff, Timothy Twitch, is a coarse, rough-speaking fellow, who, rating his rude insolence as wit, holds that 'a joke breaks no bones, as we say among us that practise the law;' and, after his insolence, cringing for a bribe, declares, 'I am sure no man can say I ever gave a gentleman, that was a gentleman, ill usage. If I saw that a gentleman was a gentleman, I have taken money not to see him for ten weeks together.' His follower, little Flanigan, 'has a good face, a very good face; but then he is a little seedy,' and so is put into the blue and gold suit. But his face is not his only recommendation. 'There's not a prettier scout in the four counties after a shy cock than he. Scents like a hound; sticks like a weasel.' Both are alike vulgar, of the pot-house type of vulgarity. One would say they were not quite the men for their vocation; not active enough, nor sly, nor sleek enough; but, as was said before, Goldsmith had been himself in the hands of bailiffs, and knew the tribe.

These are the personages as Goldsmith describes them: now let us turn to the picture, and see how

Frith has painted them. They are arranged, as will be seen, in two distinct groups: the bailiffs on the right, Honeywood and Miss Richland, with her maid, on the left; a sort of natural repulsion keeping them well apart—one of those instinctive proprieties that frequently escape notice, but always mark the true artist. But not only are the groups thus opposed by their places in the picture, the contrast of refinement with vulgarity is equally brought out by the quiet, well-bred ease of one set of persons as compared with the exaggerated attitudes of the others in their awkward attempts to appear genteel. And here, in this first broad general view, may be observed the concord of the attitude of each, the position of the limbs and the movement of the hands, with the expression of their respective countenances; and along with this the simplicity and naturalness of the individual pose, and of the arrangement of the whole.

The central figure of the composition is the Good-natured Man. Honeywood is a tall, slim young fellow, very gentlemanly, very good-looking, evidently amiable, and, like the original, rather insipid. Though in a morning habit, he is faultlessly attired according to the fashion of the middle of the last century. Over an embroidered silver-coloured silk waistcoat, with long flap-pockets, brown velvet breeches, and silk stockings, he has thrown negligently a long yellow dressing-gown, so as to show the blue lining. His right hand holds lightly the tips of his visitor's fingers, as, with assumed nonchalance, he introduces to her 'two of my very good friends, Mr. Twitch and Mr. Flanigan.'

The expression of Miss Richland's face, at first half-puzzled but now gliding into certainty, as she looks towards these uncouth specimens of humanity, is very happily rendered. You can see, and follow step by step, her *aside*, as plainly as though you heard it—'Who can these odd-looking men be? I fear it is as I was informed. It must be so.' But Miss Richland is altogether one of Mr. Frith's happiest efforts. She is

bending in a gracious but formal courtesy—an attitude that seldom appears graceful in a picture, and here she is evidently constrained by involuntary repugnance of the men to whom she is paying this outward tribute of respect—yet there is no question possible respecting her ease and breeding. As Goldsmith says of Mdlle. Clarion, 'Her first appearance is excessively engaging.' And her elegance is not merely superficial. She has the perfect ease and polish of good society, but there is the charm of frankness and innate kindness. Lovely as is her face, it is bettered by the sweetness, tenderness, and intelligence that irradiate it.

It is not till you have well studied her face that you observe how becomingly and unobtrusively she is attired, and how skilfully the artist has noted the rich dress and peculiar fashion of the time—how free, in a word, from all awkwardness and ostentation the costume sits. For the benefit of our fair readers who may not have immediate access to the original painting, we will make a brief note of Miss Richland's attire, not very accurate, perhaps, for we are utterly ignorant in mercery, but sufficient to supplement the engraving. It is, it will be remembered, the morning walking dress of the days when George the Third was young, or a little earlier; the days when

'Of in dreams invention they'd bestow
To change a founce, or add a furbelow.'

The flounced and furbelowed petticoat—plainly the main feature, the pith and essence of the dress, that which serves as support and motive of all the rest—is a rich, figured, pale drab lutestring; and over it is the open skirt, also of a light silk, but of a different texture and more creamy hue. The black hat is lined with crimson taffety, which, with the large red bow at her bosom, serves, as a painter would say, to clear and brighten, or, as we might phrase it, to set off, or give health and tone to her pearly complexion. Her hands are gloved, the left resting in Honeywood's, the right in a natty little figured silk muff. A short black cloak completes a very

pretty and ladylike costume. And the ladylike character of her beauty, dress, and bearing is rendered the more obvious by the contiguity of the plebeian good looks and plainer habit of her maid, Garnet, standing immediately behind her.

With equal distinctness, though with more appearance of effort, is the vulgarity of the opposite group brought out. Twitch, the principal bailiff, a churlish, broad-shouldered fellow, not having had time to don a suit of Honeywood's, is accoutred in his own rough brown horseman's coat, long red waistcoat, velveted shorts, and dirty top-boots, his thoroughly blackguard costume being completed by a coloured belcher twisted untidily about his neck, and a curled coachman's wig. A glance is enough to account for Miss Richland's dislike; but it needs a perusal of the play to be satisfied that the make-up is not overdone. In little Flanigan's genuine Hibernian face, red shock hair, and obsequious bow, we have the low Irish runner exactly hit off. Mr. Frith has put a brass-headed constable's staff in the hand behind his back, seemingly to indicate more clearly his office; but for this purpose it was hardly necessary, and for any other it was not wanted. Flanigan would scarcely have taken out his emblem of authority in such a presence, at least after what had occurred between him and Honeywood. To us it seems the one mistake in the composition, and Mr. Frith, if he were to repeat the picture, which he is not likely to do, would, we have little doubt, omit it.

The two groups are, as was said, entirely distinct and strongly contrasted. But observe how cleverly Mr. Frith has, by a simple little incident, connected them, and, at the same time, enforced the contrast between them. In taking Honeywood's hand Miss Richland has let slip from hers the ribbon by which she held her spaniel, and he has run forward, and is now looking up and sniffing suspiciously at the bailiffs, marking, as significantly as dog can, his scorn of 'the vulgar rogues.' And observe, on the other hand, how

skilfully the principal group is, to speak technically, carried out of the picture by Honeywood's servant standing with the half-open door in his hand, watching furtively the curious rencontre; hinting by his sly looks at what has gone before, and indicating the out-of-the-way character of the scene. And further, whilst noticing this little evidence of artistic completeness, we may be pardoned for calling attention to the marks of study in the introduction of the various accessories, their propriety, careful execution, and yet entire subordination. Apart from the conception of character and dramatic power, the composition and execution of the picture would attest it the work of a consummate artist.

The 'Catalogue of the Sheepshanks Collection,' to which this picture belongs, says of Mr. Frith (with some unnecessary dislocation of grammar), 'The thoroughly English character of his subjects have made his works great favourites with the public.' There can be no doubt that the English character of his works has done much towards insuring their popularity. But he is so great a favourite in reality because he represents familiar scenes and agreeable subjects not only with scrupulous accuracy, but with exquisite tact and refinement—qualities rarely found in previous painters of similar scenes—thus lifting them out of the category of mere commonplace imitation, and breaking the chain of traditional treatment. He thus, while in his earlier works taking a position between Leslie and Mulready, vindicated his claim to originality of conception and treatment, and originality is what the public seldom fails to recognize.

The secret of his originality, we suspect, lies in his having had the good fortune or courage to select a class of subjects exactly corresponding to his personal tastes, and working them out in his own way. And this seems the more likely from his inferior success in subjects chosen for him, and when working under enforced conditions. Take, for example, his 'Claude Duval,' or even 'The Railway Station.' Every

line and touch exhibits the conscientious labour bestowed upon them, but every line is equally wanting in spontaneity.

But we must not part from the picture before us without remarking how well it illustrates Mr. Frith's anxiety to make even the simplest subject as perfect as possible. The more carefully it is examined, the more clearly will it be seen that every part has been deliberately studied, probably before a touch

was given to the actual painting, and that it was then patiently wrought out, with a continuous regard to each part, and to the effect of the whole. As it now appears, the seeming ease with which it has been executed might lead an incautious observer to underrate the labour bestowed upon it. Undoubtedly it was painted with comparative facility, but such facility could only have resulted from long years of intelligent practice.

SKETCHES OF THE ENGLISH BENCH AND BAR.

III.

The late Lord Chief Baron.

SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK, it was well said some ten years ago, is a 'wonderful and venerable man;' and, of course, he is now even still more wonderful and venerable. There is no one living who, at his great age, and after a life of such unceasing exertion, retains such wonderful vivacity and vigour. His countenance, which reminds one of that of an old lion, bears the impress of intellect, energy, and thought. It is the countenance of one gifted with a great intellect, which has been highly educated and nobly exercised. It is the head of a man who was a senior wrangler some half a century ago, and who, after some thirty years of forensic struggles and forensic triumphs, and twenty years of judicial labours, finds his recreation in the most abstruse mathematics, and at the same time is playful and pleasant as a child. There is the great secret of the Lord Chief Baron's vivacity and vigour. He has always been in heart and spirit a boy. When a boy, he must have been of a noble and manly character, as when he is an old man, his heart retains the freshness of a boy's. He is one of those of whom our great poet so beautifully speaks, who in their youth were temperate and abstinent—

'Therefore his age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty but kindly.'

There is no one upon the Bench—we lament that he is there no longer—who better deserves a place in these pages than the late Lord Chief Baron, both because of his amazing vigour of mind, and his marked and remarkable character, and also on account of the interest he takes in matters of literature, science, and art. We believe there is not a single judge whose mind takes such a wide range, and at the same time penetrates so deeply into science. He takes a deep interest in every branch of science or of art; is President of the Photographic Institution, and not long since presided at one of their assemblies; and are they not proud of the venerable old man?

The prevailing characteristic of the Lord Chief Baron's countenance is one of solemn dignity—one might almost say majesty. There is no judge on the Bench—nor has there ever been within living memory—one who equalled or even resembled him in this. Any one who looks at his photograph or portrait must be struck with it. There is something in it wonderfully expressive of intellect, energy, and dignity. There is a combination of these attributes to be observed reflected in it, to be looked for in vain in any other ju-



SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK.



dicial personage. In repose, the expression is one of mild, calm, intellectual dignity, with an immensity of latent energy; and when that energy is raised, the aspect of the countenance is majestic.

He certainly was a wonderful man, that old Chief Baron. His intellect was perfect, though his bodily strength was weak. For a few hours in a day he could still apply the mighty power of his mind to legal labours, and the vast aid they derived from practice and experience would for a time more than counterbalance his physical weakness. He was weak, however, and could not do much work at a time, and a long hard day's work was too much for him. While his strength lasted, however, his vigour and vivacity were wonderful at his age. His utterance and mode of speaking were always exceedingly energetic and emphatic, and there was a certain measured, stately tone of delivery which wonderfully enhanced its dignity. While at the bar, his oratory was remarkable for dignity; and there was no advocate who assumed so lofty a tone, and gave one so much the idea of Roman dignity. This tone and manner, of course, were well suited to the Bench, and while Sir Frederick sat in the Exchequer he carried himself with as lofty a dignity as any one in living memory. He was good-natured and genial withal; but his countenance and manner were always remarkable for a certain solemnity and dignity, which were his chief characteristics, and in which no judge on the Bench equalled him. Having so enlarged and cultivated a mind, he had great variety of ideas, and clothed them with a happy felicity of language; and all this, united with his dignity of delivery made him a most effective and emphatic speaker. His annual addresses to the Lord Mayor in the Court of Exchequer were masterpieces of that species of eloquence in which very few men excel. Probably there is not a man on the Bench who could have delivered them. There was, however, about the Lord Chief Baron, at times, an overbearing vehemence of tone and

energy of language perfectly astounding in so old a man; and if it were not that he was so very old and venerated, it would not be tolerated. He was, however, regarded with veneration, not merely as an old man, but as a very wonderful old man, as he still is. His style of speaking upon the Bench was sometimes, perhaps, too discursive: he was fond of philosophic generalities; he digressed, as the wags of the Bar would say, 'into all manner of disquisitions upon abstract moral questions;' but still his ideas were fine, and his style was grand; although, as his manner was always very solemn and emphatic and Johnsonian, the exaggeration of it in those moods of his was somewhat amusing. The fine old fellow had a nap pretty regularly, about the middle of the day. His waking, however, was often exceedingly comical. He would start up, seize his pen, and with imperturbable gravity say to the counsel who was arguing, 'What page did you cite?' as though he had been following him closely through all his citations. For the most part he left the ordinary work of his court to his *puisnes*, who were very fond of their chief, and were very glad to do his work for him as far as they could; and if the Bar were dissatisfied, they bore it, from admiration and veneration for him, and a melancholy feeling that, with all his faults and failings, he would leave a sad gap in Westminster Hall, and it would not be easy to replace his vast power, his majestic dignity, and the matured wisdom of his long experience.

This, indeed, was what the old man said himself, when they pressed him to resign. 'Find me,' he proudly said, 'a man whom Westminster Hall will deem my equal, old as I am, and I'll resign to-morrow.' There the old man was right. Who could sit in his place without provoking painful comparisons?

They tell a capital story of the Chief Baron: that one who wished him to resign, waited on him, and hinted at it, and suggested it, for his own sake, entirely with a view to

the prolongation of his valued life, and so forth. The old man rose, and said with his grim, dry gravity, 'Will you dance with me?' The guest stood aghast, as the Lord Chief Baron, who prides himself particularly upon his legs, began to caper about with a certain youth-like vivacity. Seeing his visitor standing surprised, he capered up to him, and said, 'Well, if you won't dance with me, will you box with me?' And with that he squared up to him; and half in jest, and half in earnest, fairly boxed him out of the room. The old Chief Baron had no more visitors anxiously inquiring after his health, and courteously suggesting retirement.

Even then, when there was a case which has great interest, as the case of the 'Alexandra,' or the case of Muller, he 'warmed to his work, and did it, if not well, at all events with a wonderful vigour and an energy which at his age was really marvellous. Memory, however, began to play him tricks; he was, like all old men, fond of relying on it, and that was a dangerous habit for an old judge, for it may fail him, and lead him into sad mistakes.

But there could be no doubt of the vivacity and vigour of the old man's mind; and, though his voice was feeble with age, still it retained its measured, emphatic utterance, its dignity of delivery, its impressive manner, and its solemn tone.

The peculiar characteristic of the Chief Baron's features is a certain solemn dignity. This aspect they never lost, even when he was aroused to energy. He always spoke in the same measured and emphatic manner, even when, as often was the case, he raised the tone of his voice, in the heat of argument or discussion when he was impatient of opposition, and declaimed with vehemence. There was no one on the Bench who united, to such a degree, dignity and energy. At times his earnestness was almost impassioned; yet he never lost this dignity of manner and emphatic, dogmatic, solemnity of tone. He became, indeed, more dogmatic and dignified the more he was opposed, and propounded propo-

sitions as if he were pronouncing sentence. When his mind was fairly engaged in argument, no one can have an idea of his vehemence and vigour; and he was a match, in these moods, for the whole Bar put together. He was like an old lion at bay; and woe to any one who came near him. He would lay in the dust all who dared to oppose him, and then fold his arms, lean back on his seat, and look calmly and proudly down upon them, appearing at such moments what he undoubtedly was—a wonderful and venerable man.

The Lord Chief Baron was prone to the expression of strong general views, which he conveyed in a manner eminently characteristic, with an idiomatic vigour and originality almost amusing. 'If,' said he, on one occasion—'if every man were to take advantage of every occasion to have "*the law*" of his neighbour, life would not be *long enough* for the litigation which would result. *All flesh and blood would be turned into plaintiffs and defendants!*' The reader must imagine this uttered in a slow, distinct, deliberate, solemn voice, with considerable energy, and a raising of the tone at the words in italics. This may serve as a specimen of the Lord Chief Baron's style. It is full of the emphatic utterances of general principles, or broad moral sentiments, which he sometimes makes the basis of his legal views; whence it is that they were often uncommonly loose and unsatisfactory; and, though sometimes the utterances of the old man had a breadth of view, and elevation of idea which, united with great dignity and energy of expression, made them eloquent, they often broke away from the bounds of law, and have even afforded ample food for wagery.

The Lord Chief Baron was so apt to take broad bold views, and to act upon them boldly and abruptly, by directing a nonsuit, or verdict for the defendant, that 'Pollock's nonsuits' passed into a byword; and a distinguished advocate now on the Bench has been heard to say, 'Oh, it was one of the Chief Baron's nonsuits!' Not long ago

in a case of some magnitude, in which a host of eminent men were engaged on either side, he took upon himself suddenly to direct a nonsuit, absolutely astounding every one on both sides; there being evidence both ways, and a strong case for the jury. The nonsuit was, of course, set aside, though it was in his own court; he himself could scarcely attempt to uphold it. There is not a single judge but himself who would have ventured upon that nonsuit; nor has there been one within living memory who would have dared to do it. The old Chief Baron had been always characterised by a high tone of lofty audacity; and he had not yet lost that trait. Age, with him, had certainly not brought timidity; on the contrary, it seemed to have brought greater boldness: the audacity had augmented with his years. Such a nonsuit as that, at an age of nearly eighty, was probably without parallel in legal memory.

Sir Frederick has a fondness, not only for science and literature, but for art; and several arts he practises himself—photography, for instance. He possesses also a wonderful skill in caligraphy, which he is fond of turning to purposes of amusement. He practises all sorts of innocent deceptions upon his friends, being able to imitate any handwriting perfectly. He once wrote a most absurd opinion, in the name of a learned friend of his at the Bar, and sent it to him, perplexing him most painfully by its apparent genuineness and its monstrous absurdity. There was the signature—or what seemed to be so—and the handwriting; apparently beyond all doubt: but the matter—it was downright, stark nonsense. The poor barrister could not make it out, until, all of a sudden, he remembered the Chief Baron's skill in caligraphy, and was consoled, and at the same time amazed and amused beyond measure at his illustrious friend's success. On another occasion, it is said, the Chief Baron forged the signature of a friend of his—an eminent dramatic author—to an 'order' for admission to a theatre—having already got a genu-

ine one, and desirous of seeing whether he could counterfeit it. He did so, and substituted the forged one for the genuine one; and it was so perfect a counterfeit that it was passed as readily as the genuine one would have been, which the Chief Baron retained, to show to his literary friend, and triumph over him in his caligraphical skill. His friend said, 'Why, my Lord Chief Baron, you would have made a *first-rate forger*!' 'Shouldn't I?' said the Chief Baron; 'I should have beaten Fauntleroy out and out, and even surpassed the illustrious Patch.'*

The Lord Chief Baron was proud, as well he might be, of his age,—or rather, of his perfect possession of his mental powers, and his fitness for judicial duties at such an age. 'I am' (he is fond of saying) 'the oldest judge who has ever been known to sit on the English Bench. I am eighty-two. Lord Mansfield never, I believe, sat after he was eighty.' There are stronger instances on the Irish Bench, we believe; but then the work of an Irish Chief is nothing to that of an English Chief: and no one ever dreamt that the Lord Chief Baron was not perfectly able to discharge his judicial duties with efficiency, so far as mental power went.

The Lord Chief Baron was proud, as well he might be, of his family, and his descendants. Being lately asked if he had yet attained the dignity of a great-grandfather, he answered, proudly, 'Yes, indeed; I have five great-grandchildren.' He added, 'The total number of my descendants is sixty-five.' What a patriarchal dignity and happiness the old judge had attained unto! He had indeed, in the language of Scripture, lived to see his children's children, unto the third and fourth generation. At the last assizes at Kingston—the last at which he ever sat—one or two of his grandchildren, some fine young girls, the daughters of one of his sons, were sitting beside him on the Bench:

* The man who in the last century kept up for a series of years the most astounding system of forgery on the Bank, as narrated in 'All the Year Round.'

and it was pleasant to see how benignly the old man looked upon them from time to time, and how their fair young cheeks flushed with happy pride as he smiled, and said a few playful words to them; and how delighted, and with what affectionate veneration his son—their father—looked upon them. Altogether, it was a fine family picture; and one could not fail to see that all that domestic happiness can bring a man in his old age had fallen to the lot of the Lord Chief Baron, and that he was loved and honoured by his children and his children's children.

Sir Frederick is just the sort of old man that young people are so fond of. Grave, yet playful; with a quiet, gentle gravity, as of a great intellect taking its last calm look on life, and looking at all around it with a loving spirit, blended with natural playfulness, ever breaking out in many a graceful pleasantry; a calm and cheerful temperament, as of a man who has made the most of life, and spent it wisely, and feels it now drawing towards a close, desires to be at peace with all, and with thankfulness and cheerfulness to yield it up when called upon.

Sir Frederick is a man whose juvenile energy, vitality, and vivacity are perfectly inexhaustible. There was a story current not long ago, that he had actually, at his venerable age, taken a fancy to *learn German*!—and in order that he might *read German works*! Any one who has the most distant idea of the difficulty of learning the German language—especially at such an advanced age—and of the depth and extent of German literature, will be at once amazed and amused at the idea of a judge, at the age of eighty-two, proposing to learn that language, with the object of reading that literature. What a thorough confidence in his own vitality; what a consciousness of his own unwaning energies and unwavering powers this shows! We do not know how far the fact is literally true; but we heard it as currently reported among the Bar, and we have reason to believe it to be true: and even if it

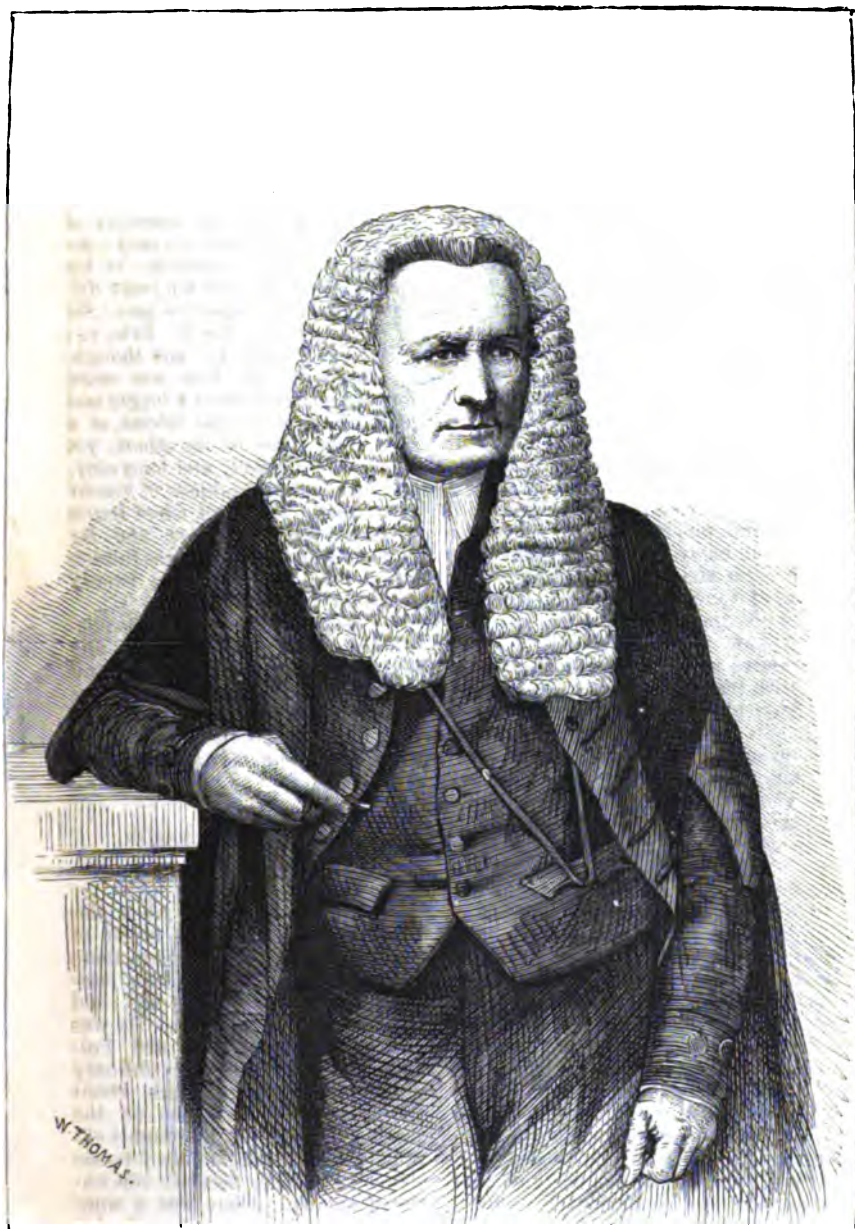
be not literally correct, we are sure that there was some foundation for it; and the very currency of such a story shows the sense universally entertained of the Chief Baron's exhaustless energies.

It is a remarkable fact, that of the three 'chiefs,' Sir Frederick Pollock was by many years the oldest, and that he was decidedly—on the whole—the youngest, in the elasticity of his energies, and the buoyancy—we might say the boyishness—of his spirits. There was just ten years' difference in their respective ages: Sir A. Cockburn, 62; Sir W. Erle, 72; and Sir F. Pollock, 82; and though, no doubt, Sir W. Erle was more robust, and could stand a longer and harder task of judicial labour, at a time, than either of the others, yet in point of elasticity and buoyancy, and unwavering freshness of vigour and vivacity, the Lord Chief Baron surpassed the two other, and far younger Chiefs, albeit he was full ten years older than one, and twenty years older than the other.

At length, however, the decline of physical strength warned the fine old man that it would be wiser and better to retire, while his mental powers remained unimpaired, and fully able to enjoy the repose of retirement. Long may he live to enjoy it!

THE LORD CHIEF BARON, SIR FITZROY KELLY.

Sir Fitzroy Kelly was, when elevated to the Bench, the father of the English Bar; at all events, there was no one at the Bar of an eminence equal to his in age and standing in the profession. He was contemporary with Erle and Pollock, and had retired from ordinary practice about twenty years, about the period they had been on the Bench. His features thoroughly express the chief trait of his forensic character—deep, earnest, concentrated energy. There was a wonderful compressed energy in his tone and manner of delivery, every word weighted with deep emphasis—in this respect resembling Erle, only with more perfect elocution.



LORD CHIEF BARON KELLY.

It would be impossible to look upon the countenance of Sir Fitzroy without seeing, even if one had never heard anything of his previous career, that he was a man of remarkable energy. Deep, condensed, concentrated energy is the predominant idea his countenance conveys, combined with a kind of keen, piercing, suspicious penetrativeness of glance. There is no intellect, no genius, no engaging air of frankness; it is the look of a man of a determined, iron energy, and a man by nature and character, keen, watchful, and wary.

Sir Fitzroy had great forensic power. His only fault was monotony; and that had grown upon him with years. When a younger man, he had so much warmth and energy as to hide it; but of late years it was observable, and there was a tautology and a tediousness which gave a dulness to his delivery; but still, under all this dulness you could see the remains of a first-rate forensic speaker and a formidable advocate; and even to the last, when warmed by a great cause, there would break forth some flashes of his former eloquence, showing that 'even in his ashes burn the wonted fires.'

Sir Fitzroy, however, had so long retired from ordinary practice—twenty years at least—that he had become half-forgotten in Westminster Hall; and few who saw and heard him on the rare occasions of his appearance there could remember his forensic achievements thirty years ago, when Follett, and Pollock, and Erle were at the Bar, and Lyndhurst sat where he sits now. During that long interval he had been more of a politician than an advocate, and he had achieved a parliamentary position and reputation. He had, however, acquired enormous experience at the Common Law Bar before he left it; he went a good deal into Chancery, and the House of Lords, and the Queen's Bench, in great cases; his mind, of course, was much enlarged by his parliamentary career. He has great gravity, and some dignity of manner: he preserves the proper demeanour of a judge; is calm, patient, pains-

taking, and considerate; and keeps his Court well in order; and as his mental powers are still in their full vigour, he makes an admirable and invaluable Lord Chief Baron.

THE LATE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE ERLE.

Lord Chief Justice Erle, though some few years younger than the late Lord Chief Baron, and not so wonderful a man, bid fair to be as venerable. He is a man of less vivacity and less demonstrative energy. His energy is more concentrated, so to speak; his mind is less enlarged and elastic; his manner is more quiet and constrained; his countenance, though not so majestic, has more settled gravity in its expression; his features are not so fine, but his face is more grave. Then his voice, also, is more subdued and restrained; his utterance is slow, grave, and sustained; with no variety of inflection, no alteration of tone—monotonous, though earnest, with a kind of unchanging emphasis, very different from the demonstrative and impressive earnestness, the altered tones and heightened accents of the late Lord Chief Baron. Sir William Erle was never known to raise his voice to a declamatory tone during all the twenty years he had been upon the Bench. And even when he was at the Bar, he was strikingly argumentative—never declamatory. His style of speaking was plain and homely. He has a fine fresh florid countenance, with a mixture of good-nature and shrewdness. His eyes are keen, yet kindly, and his whole air and aspect are thoroughly gentlemanly. Yet there is a smack of homeliness about him, and in his voice a trace of provincialism or rusticity. There is a compressed energy in his delivery, shown more in earnest emphasis than in raised tones of voice; indeed, the tone is nearly always the same, and this makes it somewhat monotonous; but its honesty, its very homeliness, its earnestness, its good sense always win the utmost attention, and gives great influence to what he says.

He summed up in a plain, earnest, sensible way, and never lost a certain gravity of demeanour which approached to dignity. His whole manner and demeanour were exceedingly judicial; and as he was hard-working, sensible, and full of quiet, business-like energy, he was thought one of the best of our judges. As he grew older and older, he reminded one of the venerable Tindal. He had a sense of quiet humour, and rather liked it; and, not long ago, he said to a counsel, who apologized for a sally of wit which set the court laughing, 'The court is very much obliged to any learned gentleman who beguiles the tedium of a legal argument with a little honest hilarity.' But he himself had no wit or humour in him, nor any spice of that solemn waggery in which the old Chief Baron so delighted; altogether he was a graver character. He resembled greatly in his occasional satirical style of observation—though not in the musical voice and classic delivery—Lord Lyndhurst. There was often something in his tone which seemed to recal Lyndhurst, before whom he practised a great deal, for whom he had a great admiration, and who made him judge. He resembled him in the calmness of his manner, and the apparent coldness of his tone; arising not from any deficiency of feeling—for his feelings are strong—but from their stern compression under habitual self-restraint. It is no secret that, naturally, his feelings are strong, but that he had for a long course of years, so kept them under stern restraint, that no one remembers any outbreak. He belonged to an old school, of which he and the late Lord Chief Baron and Sir Fitzroy Kelly are the last living representatives. They all had this common characteristic: a certain measured emphasis of utterance—which belonged to a time when speaking was more oratorical than it is now. It was least so in Sir William Erle, whose nature is simple and whose style is quiet; still it was apparent in his delivery, which was most monotonous, and least relieved by variety of

inflection or change of tone. Sir William Erle is naturally of an amiable character. His tastes and pursuits are more rural than studious; he is attached to animals, especially horses and dogs; he is fond of open air exercise; he spends most of his leisure riding about. He is not a sportsman, for he hates the idea of killing any living thing (except vermin), and they say he won't have the birds shot on his land, and that it is a paradise for the feathered tribe. He may often be seen, when in the country, with dogs fondling him, and they say the very cart horses on his farm know him. He is a thorough English gentleman, with a fine honest nature and fine manly tastes and pursuits. All this you could see on his countenance; and if engravings had but colour, and could give the ruddy freshness of his cheek, or the clear blue of his eye, you would see it in his likeness; as it is, you can catch the keen yet kindly expression of his face, with his pleasant aspect—so shrewd, so sensible, so genial.

Few men were more beloved and admired than Sir William Erle. His heart was even better than his head; and his good and genial qualities amply excused any infirmities of his mind.

A skilful physiognomist would probably say, looking at the countenance of Sir William Erle, that his is not a mind as broad as it is powerful: not so comprehensive as it is strong in its grasp, and not so quick in its glance as it is tenacious in its hold. And these impressions of his mental character would be tolerably correct. His mind was not so much by any means so marked by breadth as it was by depth. He got at the bottom of a subject, so far as he went into it, but then he was apt to take up one part of it, rather than to embrace and comprehend the whole. He has a powerful mind, but a mind rather powerful in its grasp of what it once lays hold of, than in getting hold of the whole of what is to be got hold of. The complaint of Erle was, that he was not unlikely to be so firm and immovable, on his first

impression of a case, as never to alter it: in which respect he resembled a good deal Baron Martin. When Erle, they said, had formed his impression, as to getting him to alter it, you might as well try to move one of the Pyramids. This trait in his character was often, nay, constantly displayed. It is the key to his whole character. He himself, in his grave, good-humoured way, often avowed, and displayed, this trait of character. Thus one day, at judge's chambers, after having been pressed very strongly for some time against his own views by counsel (a capital fellow, one Tom Clark), the Chief Justice said, with quaint good humour, 'Mr. Clark, *I'm one of the most obstinate men in the world.*' 'God forbid,' said Tom, 'that I should be so rude as to contradict your Lordship.' He laughed, with the most thorough enjoyment. Thus, one day, after hearing Mr. Bovill, as he thought, long enough, against a new trial, he rose up, stuck his thumbs in his girdle, and, with a comic look of humorous determination, and a sly twinkle in his eye, as if he quite saw the fun of it, and enjoyed it, said, 'Here we stand, Mr. Bovill, we four men; and we have all *firmly* made up our minds' (with an immense emphasis on "*firmly*") 'that there must be a new trial. If you think it worth while going on after that' (playfully), 'why, of course, we'll hear you, Mr. Bovill.' It need hardly be said that even Mr. Bovill—who himself is tenacious enough, and utterly inexhaustible in words—could not stand up any longer, but sat down laughing. On another occasion, the Lord Chief Justice said—'Mr. So-and-so, there is a time in every man's mind, at which he *lets down the floodgates of his understanding*, and allows not one drop more to enter; and *that time, in my mind, has fully arrived!*' It was, of course, hopeless to say more: the *intense* emphasis with which it was spoken made it so expressive of relentless determination and fixed, immovable resolve. Now, Cockburn would no more have said either of these things than he would have stood on his head in

open court. And no one who knows the judges would hesitate for a single instant, if he were told the story without the name, as to who *did* say them. It is curious how an anecdote may illustrate a character. There is often an idiosyncrasy in a single expression which reveals its author, and portrays his character.

In many traits of his mental and judicial character Lord Chief Justice Erle resembles the late Lord Chief Justice Campbell, with whom he sat so long on the Queen's Bench—the same energy; the same iron will; the same grave, solid—almost stolid—gravity and silence; the same slow manner, and quiet, earnest, dogged demeanour. It is curious to see how eminent men borrow of each other some prevailing traits of manner, resulting, no doubt, partly from some resemblance in character. There was the same obstinacy in Campbell as in Erle. To move his mind, once made up, was like trying to remove from its base one of the granite mountains of his native land. And it was scarcely less hard in the case of Erle.

Some years ago a writer in a quarterly described Erle as, 'Bating a little English obstinacy, the best of our judges on the Bench of Common Law.' This obstinacy was the one flaw in Erle's judicial character, and though he was always invested with the strongest sense of justice, it often tended to counteract it. It was a defect which arose from his mental character. There was no sufficient power in Erle's mind of balancing opposite views. As if conscious of that, his great object was to get one view firmly into his mind, and what that shall be was determined, sometimes, perhaps, a little, by preconceived impressions. There was not a particle of philosophy in Erle's mind. He was what he calls 'practical,' and he never delivered a judgment or a charge in which he did not allude to 'practical experience,' and the views he took were always rather practical than philosophical. And he had had, no doubt, a vast deal of the practical experience he so prized, and he had immense energy, and sound judgment, and great power of work,

and, on the whole, the Bar deemed him a 'strong' judge.

Sir William Erle, with all his faults, left a void which will not easily be filled. Occurring so soon after the retirement of Sir Frederick Pollock, it was the more felt. His retirement, as it took place in full term, was a most impressive scene, which none who witnessed it will ever forget. The whole Bar felt that they had sustained a grievous loss, and never was a judge more missed from his accustomed seat.

MR. JUSTICE BYLES.

Mr. Justice Byles, though he was on the Bench before Sir Fitzroy, is a younger man than he is; and it was only just as Sir Fitzroy had reached the climax of his forensic career, some twenty years ago, that Byles became frequently his rival. The memorable case of Tawell, in which Mr. Serjeant Byles conducted the case for the prosecution, and Sir F. Kelly for the defence, was the most striking occasion in which they were brought in contact, Byles being then ready for his elevation to the Bench, and Sir Fitzroy for his retirement from regular forensic practice.

Mr. Justice Byles deserves portraiture in the same class as Pollock, and Erle, and Kelly, because he belongs emphatically to the 'old school'—the school, for example, of Campbell, who for thirty years was the constant antagonist of Pollock; the school of Tindal, and Kelly, and Erle; a grave, slow, sturdy, methodic, decorous, dignified school, bringing more to mind what the old lawyers of past ages might have been, and what, from their portraits, we should fancy that they were.

The prevailing characteristics of the countenance of Byles are—calm energy, great caution, and stolid gravity. There is a remarkable and unmistakable look of firmness in the forehead, especially just over the eye. Somebody who had seen him in a great cause at the Bar of the Lords, said 'he looked like a lion,' and so he did. There is an iron energy about the forehead and eyes and the whole face very

rarely met with; and his tone and manner of speech was what one might fancy from such a countenance—quiet, calm, slow, grave, sententious, with a sort of compressed energy and iron teneness, so to speak, which is wonderfully impressive.

His manner, even at the Bar, was rather judicial than forensic, and was quite the manner of the old lawyers. He had more the air of a judge than an advocate; and he seemed marked out by nature for his present position. In this respect he resembled the late Lord Campbell, whose great *forte* was gravity, and it is wonderful what a force there is in it. Upon his model Byles formed his style. He has the very gesture of Campbell, the only one he ever allowed himself,—standing still and immovable as a statue,—and holding up his right hand. It is a simple gesture, but when done slowly, solemnly, calmly, with a grave air, and an earnest utterance, it has an impressive effect. At all events it was all the action Campbell or Byles ever had, and it went a great way with them. Byles recalls old Campbell more than any other judge on the Bench. There was no man at the Bar so cautious—some said crafty—as Byles. There is a story of one of the Guildhall jurors being overheard to say, when Byles entered the court, 'Here comes old Crafty!' He was indeed a most formidable antagonist; always astute and observant; ever watchful, and ever wary; calm, cool, and collected; never off his guard for an instant. He was really such a man as you might imagine Coke to have been, or Cecil—grave, cold, astute, taciturn, keen, observant, cautious, suspicious, undemonstrative, unimpassioned, full of deep, quiet energy, though without warmth, without eloquence; that is, eloquence, as a thing of genius and warmth and imagination. There was plenty of force and power—very weighty were those words of his, falling so gravely and with such compressed energy from his lips; and even now, upon the Bench, in summing up an important case, there is not a single judge upon the Bench (since Pollock)

whose tone and manner have such an impressive effect, such an air of solemn dignity, as Mr. Justice Byles. This, and a certain vein of quaint, grave, dry humour, and a fondness for old-fashioned 'saws' and sayings, make him quite one of the 'old school,' and carry us back ages in our 'mind's eye' to the days of the old Elizabethan lawyers. If any one wishes to have an idea how they looked, and spoke, and expressed themselves, the best way is to look at Mr. Justice Byles. Also, if one wishes to have a notion of the difference between the old school, and the new school, let him, after looking at Byles, look at Bramwell. If he wants to go further back than Elizabethan times, and have an idea of the rude, rough, blunt vigour of older days, let him look at Martin—or, rather, look at and listen to him—and he will have an idea of what judges were in ages before they were formal and conventional, as they had become in Eliza-

bethan days, and as exemplified in Mr. Justice Byles. But, indeed, there would be no need to go out of his own court to seek at once a resemblance and a contrast; for by his side sits Mr. Justice Willes, quite Elizabethan in his aspect—

'With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut.'

and the Chief of his Court is Sir William Bovill, keen, quick, sharp, fluent, off-hand in his tone and manner, quite of the modern school, and as great a contrast to Byles as it is possible to conceive. But that Mr. Justice Byles belongs so emphatically to the old school of which he and Sir Fitzroy are now the last upon the Bench, it would have been unfit to give him precedence to the Chief Justice; and, on the other hand, the Chief Justice must not be brought in at the end of a chapter, and he will, therefore, as the head of the new school of judges commence the next group of sketches.



PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES.

CHAPTER VII.

KIN AND KIND.

IT was hard on Miss Lyon to be compelled to surrender her own judgment on a matter that was of much moment to her; but, on the whole, it was expedient that she should do so, and, since she could raise no insurmountable barrier to the going, that she should go as amiably as might be in her mother's train to Mr. Talbot's house. Her sole aversion to the scheme, indeed, was to be found in the fact of her distrust of Mrs. Sutton, and knowledge of Mrs. Sutton's dislike to herself. Mr. Talbot's hopes and fears, and doubts and sentiments generally, respecting her, were so many sealed books to this girl, who was genuinely indifferent to him. Had she not been this, there would have been another disquieting element added to her state of mind on the subject.

When once Blanche had made up her mind as to the inevitability, or at any rate the advisability, of a course, she never paused to question the superior propriety there would have been in pursuing any other. If the path she had taken proved more miry, and the briars and thorns by the wayside more prickly than she had foreseen, she did not pause to lament these facts, and to speculate on the superior advantages possibly possessed by the roads she had not followed. She only trod more carefully, and more untiringly pressed back the obstructions, without ever halting to bewail what might have been.

In this special instance she had to make up her mind without delay, being desirous of having some definite opinion of her own to advance when she met her mother in the morning. Fell experience had taught Blanche that any hopes of a calm and well-balanced discussion of a plan with Mrs. Lyon were built upon sand. Mrs. Lyon would fluently set forth long rolls of agreeable and extremely improbable possibilities —

would hopefully first suggest, and then assert, and then proceed to pre-
sage a further train of fortunate events in the freshest manner. But the lightest hint to the effect that her eloquence, praiseworthy as it was in itself, had the slight drawback of being founded upon slippery and untenable grounds, was sufficient to change the joy strain into a dirge, the psalm that celebrated her hopes into a piteous protest against the fate that was always less bright than she had anticipated its being five minutes before; and the daughter, who was stoutly opposed to abiding alternately in a glittering palace of hope and a gloomy cavern of despair.

'It will be useless to talk it over with mamma,' Blanche Lyon thought; 'I shall never glean from her whether it will be well for me to fall in with her plans or to oppose them.' So, in default of another, she talked it over with herself, and came to the conclusion that, since she could propose nothing better, and since her objections to the plan were, after all, of a puerile, personal nature, that she would agree, and make the best of it.

It must be understood that Mrs. Lyon's knowledge of the world into which she had undertaken to introduce Beatrix Talbot was of the scantiest order; that her instincts were not those keen, bright ones which save their possessors from the thousand snares laid on all sides for them in social life; that she had never been known to do the best thing by intuition; and that all these facts were painfully patent to her child. Still Blanche felt that it behoved her to be passive, and she resolved that, as she had to bow to the inevitable, she would do it becomingly.

In her own inefficient way Mrs. Lyon had armed herself for a sort of contest by breakfast time, the morning after Blanche's return. She had

charged her memory with countless precedents that bore a pale resemblance to the case, and she had come to a comprehension of the propriety of keeping silence about her fondest, proudest hope in the affair. As in a glass, darkly, she saw that Edgar Talbot had that feeling which different women call by a different name for her daughter; and with greater clearness of vision she saw that, if her daughter suspected this, or even suspected that she (Mrs. Lyon) suspected it, the end would come quickly, and would be unsatisfactory to herself, and suicidal on Blanche's part.

At times it was given to this mother to have a mother's insight into her child's feelings, and this chanced to be one of these fine and rarely-occurring occasions. By reason of the little thought she gave to him, Blanche Lyon had no fear of being accused of 'following him up,' or of 'throwing herself in his way,' or, in fact, of doing any of the delicate tactics with the commission of which women are so apt to charge one another. The epidemic love had never shown itself in his case in any of the signs with which Blanche was familiar. He had been kind and considerate in a gentlemanly, distant way, that made no impression whatever on a girl whose father had theoretically impressed her with the belief that all men would be (or ought to be) these things to her, or to any other well-born beauty. And this truth got borne in upon Mrs. Lyon's mind some way or other, and was a very shield and buckler to her when the matter was mooted by Blanche, who, in accordance with her plan of putting the fairest face on what must be, asked—

'When are you thinking of going to Mr. Talbot's mamma?'

'Well, it will be very desirable to go there as soon as possible, Blanche,' Mrs. Lyon replied, with an important earnestness that would have been infinitely more amusing to Blanche if the lady who displayed it had not been her own mother. 'As soon as possible; for poor Miss Talbot is quite alone—no one to see after her. I shall not be able to reconcile it to my conscience to delay unnecessarily.'

Blanche checked a laugh, and hazarded a few guesses in the depths of her soul as to the present state of the one to whom Mrs. Lyon designed to play the part of guide, philosopher, and friend. 'I will be no hindrance to you, mamma. Tell me your arrangements, and I will fall in with them,' she said, quickly; and when she said that, Mrs. Lyon felt a little disappointed, in that she had put on such trusty armour for nothing, and proceeded to raise a little cloud of obstacles to a departure.

'It is utterly impossible that I can get away from here at a day's notice,' she began, in a gentle, injured tone. 'They are not like low lodgings—most respectable, and, I will say, most comfortable. I cannot leave them all in a hurry, as if I thought them—as if they were—as if I had—'

'Certainly not,' Blanche interrupted, as Mrs. Lyon floundered hopelessly into a labyrinth of the mistiest meanings—'certainly not. The longer we stay here the better, I think.'

'There it is,' Mrs. Lyon struck in, querulously; 'you're just like your father, Blanche—never satisfied with what I do, though I always try to do for the best.'

'Well, mother, shall I say that the sooner we go the better?' Blanche replied, good-temperedly.

'Ah! there you go from one extreme to the other,' Mrs. Lyon resumed, looking round at the walls and fire-irons, as if she would ask them to bear witness to the justice and truth of what she was saying, —'always wanting to do things in a hurry, without weighing the consequences—just like your poor dear father.' 'The sooner we go the better.' It's easy to say that, Blanche—very easy to say it; but I have to think and consider—and reflect.'

Mrs. Lyon pronounced the last word as if it was something that differed widely from everything else which she had declared she had to do—pronounced it in a tone of suffering triumph, and at the same time with a conclusive air that might almost have been the offspring of deep thought and decided convic-

tion. Blanche was not deluded into supposing it to be this though, she knew it intimately. Mrs. Lyon presently went on—

'I have to think and consider and reflect, as I hope you will have learnt to do when you're my age. I am not going to have Mr. Talbot suppose that I am impatient to go there; and I am not going till I am perfectly prepared and can go there comfortably. You eat nothing, Blanche; what is the matter?'

'Nothing,' Blanche replied. The matter was, that she was doubting her own capability not only of being a passive witness 'of all this,' as she phrased it, but of seeing others see it too; doubting her own capability of suffering this, and determining that if Miss Talbot proved in the slightest degree to be like Mrs. Sutton she (Blanche) could not stand it.

A few days after this the test commenced. Mrs. and Miss Lyon at Mr. and Miss Talbot's earnest request took up their abode in Victoria Street, and now the interest of this story commences in the meeting of Blanche and Beatrix—the two women who were born to cross each other's paths, to pain and injure one another—to whose introduction to each other all that has been written has been 'but a preliminary strain.

Mrs. Sutton had blandly volunteered to come herself and to bring her husband and Lionel to spend the first evening, and obviate anything like awkwardness. She had made the offer to Beatrix in a sweet considerate way, that won Beatrix's immediate acceptance of it. Miss Talbot had her reward when the time arrived, and with it Mrs. Sutton, for Mr. Bathurst accompanied them, and Mr. Bathurst had in the course of a few meetings recommended himself largely to Trixy. The one drawback she permitted herself to feel to the pleasure of his society on this occasion was, that Edgar was palpably a touch less than pleased to see Frank Bathurst. Trixy would not permit herself to search for a reason for this almost imperceptible shade of difference; indeed, she resolutely looked away from it when

it obtruded itself upon her notice. Mrs. Sutton was less scrupulous.

'Let us hope that the kinship is a well-established fact, for they certainly seem more than kind to each other,' she whispered to Beatrix, while Frank Bathurst was pouring out a plaintive, low-toned reproach to Miss Lyon for not having replied to his advances towards a good understanding long ago. And Beatrix replied—

'And why should they not be more than kind, Marian? I know of no reason; and ached to know that there was no reason, so far as she was herself concerned, and checked a little sigh at the speedy seeming defalcation of this man whom she had only known the other day, and tried to think 'what a well-matched pair they would be,' and could not heartily approve them nevertheless.

They were a very handsome, bright pair, a pair that took to each other joyously and suddenly, causing Mrs. Lyon to undergo most wonderful transitions of feeling as she marked them. Mr. Talbot became a mere nothing in her estimation, and Frank Bathurst stood revealed at once as the fitting and proper man, foredoomed by nature and old Mr. Lyon to marry her daughter. She almost deported herself haughtily, to the Talbots under the influence of this conviction, and judiciously murmured her belief in its being a well-founded one into Trixy Talbot's ear.

So it came to pass that more than one heart ached and beat high and painfully beneath Edgar Talbot's roof that night, after they had separated on the agreement of all meeting at Frank Bathurst's studio the following day.

No attempt has been made to depict what were the prevailing sensations of Miss Talbot and Blanche Lyon on this their first meeting. The external aspect was fair and pleasant enough, for they were both gracious-mannered women, with a good deal of cultivation superadded to their innate refinement; and it would have jarred upon their tastes to show other than a very smooth social surface. But they did not conceive and instantly develop a

devoted attachment and enthusiastic admiration for one another. To a certain degree Beatrix Talbot was in the place of power, and the half-consciousness that she was this may have been the cause of the shade of restraint which made itself manifest in her demeanour two or three times—a shade which she strove to dispel quickly in her sunniest way, but which remained long enough for Mrs. Sutton to remark it, and to fathom the cause of it to a certain extent.

'There is something very incongruous between Miss Lyon's position and her cousin; to which do you think her best adapted?' the married sister kindly asked Beatrix; and Beatrix replied—

'I won't indulge in vague speculations about her;' and then immediately added, 'there is something incongruous in Mr. Bathurst's cousin being about in the world in this way; it must strike them both painfully.'

'No, pleasantly rather; he is at once patronizing and adoring, lord and lover—King Cophetua on a small scale—and a gratified artist. Poor Trixy! your reign is over.'

'It never commenced.'

'Indeed it did, and was not altogether inglorious; traces of your rule are to be seen in his studio; he has sketched you in for his Venus, and I don't think Miss Lyon will succeed you there, for he would have so much trouble in idealizing her nose into proper proportion that he would weary of that type sooner than of yours. We will ask Lionel what he thinks about it. Lionel?'

Lionel came at her call, and listened to her remarks, and then declared himself incapable of throwing any light on his friend's final election either in the matter of Venus or anything else. In reply to Mrs. Sutton's inquiry, 'Should you say he is a marrying man, Lionel?' Lionel answered, 'No, indeed; any more than I should say that he is not a marrying man.'

'Should you like him to marry Beatrix?' She whispered this eagerly, cutting Beatrix out of the conversation by the low tone she used. Lionel's reply was made in an equally low tone.

'No, certainly not.'

'Then you know something about him—something against him?'

'About him, yes; against him, not a breath.'

'If he does not marry Trixy he will that Miss Lyon, mark my words.'

Lionel turned his head and looked at the pair mentioned. 'That would be better far,' he said.

'Why so? you do know something against him, Lionel.'

'I only know that he has the germs of inconstancy in him; the latest thing is apt to be the best in his eyes. If the shadow of a change fell, Miss Lyon would either arrest it or be entirely uninfluenced by it. I am not so sure of Beatrix.'

'Then you'll all come to our studio to-morrow?' Mr. Bathurst exclaimed, interrupting the conversation at this juncture by coming up to them. 'Miss Lyon refuses to be considered an art enthusiast, but she is good enough to be interested in my works; what time will you come?'

'Shall it be two?' Mrs. Sutton suggested.

'It shall be two, and it shall be luncheon,' Mr. Bathurst replied. And then Blanche joined them, and recommenced the old game of self-assertion, which she had played down at the Grange against Mrs. Sutton, by saying—

'Until I know whether or not the plan suits my mother, I can say nothing.'

'Nor I, of course,' Beatrix put in, hurriedly.

'You can go with me,' Mrs. Sutton said, with a well-marked emphasis on the 'you,' which completely excluded Blanche from the proposed arrangement.

'Thanks; but Mrs. Lyon will order my goings now, Marian,' Trixy replied, with a humility she would not have expressed if her sister had not offered a slight to Blanche. Then Mrs. Lyon rejoined them with some knitting which had been specially designed for this evening's employment, towards which end it had been carefully put away in the most remote corner of her largest trunk. She was acqui-

escent and anxious to oblige every one on the plan being mooted to her, and then she was assailed by saddening doubts as to her being wanted. 'Young people liked being by themselves,' she observed; and then at once proceeded to qualify that statement by declaring that she 'should not think of letting Miss Talbot and Blanche go alone, not for a moment.'

'Then it is settled, mamma, we go at two?' Blanche said, hastily.

'If that hour suits Mr. Talbot and Mr. Bathurst.' Mrs. Lyon was painfully anxious to propitiate every one.

'That is all understood,' Blanche explained; and then they parted: Mrs. Sutton whispering to her sister, as she took leave, 'Your duenna is a delightful person; your position will be a touch less ridiculous than her daughter's—there is consolation in that.'

'Thanks for offering it,' Trixy replied, wearily. Then she had to give her hand to Mr. Bathurst.

'You will see to-morrow what cause I have to be grateful to you, Miss Talbot,' he said, as her great violet eyes met his rather reproachfully; and she could think of nothing more brilliant to reply than 'Shall I indeed?'

'Yes, indeed you will; and I owe you another debt: you are the cause of my knowing my cousin at last.'

'Ah! good night!' Trixy, evidently wanted no verbal reward for this good deed; she turned away almost impatiently from his thanks to say 'good-bye' to her brother.

Presently, for the first time that evening, Miss Lyon found herself near to Lionel Talbot.

'May we see your picture, too?' she asked.

'I shall have great pleasure in showing it to you.'

She laughed and shook her head. 'No, no—neither pleasure, nor reluctance, nor any other active feeling. You won't care a bit what we think—and you will be so right.' She dropped her voice suddenly in uttering the last words; they fell upon his ears alone.

He felt that he could not conscientiously say that he should be very much interested as to what they

thought of his work; therefore he did not answer her for a few moments. During those few moments a slight transition took place in his mind respecting his interlocutor, and so he told her, honestly enough, that he should care for her opinion: 'and you will give it to me, and me alone, will you not?' he added, earnestly.

'So be it,' she said, lightly. 'I have given the same promise to my cousin. I should give the same promise to a dozen men, if they asked me—and probably break it.'

She looked up questioningly into his face as she put the probability before him.

'As far as I am concerned you will keep it?'

'I think I shall.'

'I know you will.'

'And you will not care whether I do or not. Praise or blame, it's all alike to you, Mr. Bathurst says.'

'And as a rule he is right,' Lionel replied, laughing; and Blanche felt for a moment that it would be pleasant to be the exceptionally regarded one.

CHAPTER VIII

'WHAT ARE THE WILD WAVES SAYING?'

Mr. Talbot had been feeling too profoundly dissatisfied with himself and the result of his schemes for his sister's social well-being, to take an active part in the drawing-room entertainment which has just been sketched. Absence really had made his heart grow fonder. The months that had elapsed since that time of their being together at the Grange had ripened his admiration for Blanche Lyon into love. From the moment he looked upon her again—seeing her there in his own house, sitting by his fireside as if she were at home—knowing that she would be there to say 'good morning' to him when he went out, that her welcoming word and smile would be a thing that might be his every night, when he came back wearied with the burden and heat of the day—the moment he saw her again and realized all this, he determined to win her if he could. No consideration of fortune should stay him. He

would just wait for some one of his many important ventures to come to a successful issue, and then he would marry Miss Lyon, if she would have him.

Six months ago he would not have inserted this clause in his mental declaration of intentions. But now the doubt sprang into strong and lusty being, and would not be banished as a mere creature of his disordered imagination. Six months ago he had very naturally thought of Miss Lyon as a girl living in deep and rarely broken seclusion, as an intellectual creature who would unavoidably contrast him favourably with other breakers of the same. Insensibly he had presumed on the position, and had brought all his energies to bear upon the solution of the problem of how he should gratify himself with her society, and at the same time keep himself free from all suspicion of having any intentions whatever. He had played his cards well; but he began to fear that he had played them for other people, when Frank Bathurst came in Mrs. Sutton's wake, and, on the unassailable plea of consanguinity, monopolized Blanche's attention—attention which she gave with a winning gladness that planted thorns in the pillow of the man who knew that his reputation as a grave business man had prevented his getting as near to her during long days spent together as this gay stranger had managed to get in an hour by aid of a certain calm audacity that sat upon him gracefully enough. He compelled himself to allow that it was natural, fitting, and well that Blanche should be fascinated from him by a man so much brighter than himself; yet, withal, he could not quite free her from the charge of ingratitude which his sore heart brought against her. It was grievous to him that his love should have been the direct cause of her meeting with her cousin. And now his love was nothing to her, and her cousin would be everything.

So he told himself as he sat sulkily behind a magazine watching them, and being injured by them in every tone they used and every glance they gave. In his jealous

injustice, he would neither be quite one of them, nor would he quite set himself apart from them. It was not the least painful prick that he got that night when he saw that they were unfeignedly blind to his being, or having cause to be, injured. It was almost a relief to him to blame Marian for having brought Mr. Bathurst to his house; a relief he sought to the full by censuring Mrs. Sutton to her husband, who did care for it, instead of to herself, who would not have done so. 'We have only Lionel's word for his being a decent fellow,' he said, severely, to Mark Sutton; 'and here is Marian taking him into the bosom of the family without hesitation. If I were you, I would check it.'

'He is related to the Lyons,' Mark Sutton said, by way of extenuating Marian's last offence.

'A relation they have shunned until now, when he is thrust upon them in my house by my sister. Marian will do as she likes as long as you'll let her; but I shall tell Lionel that I can have no Bohemians here while Beatrix is with me.'

'He has one of the finest properties in —shire,' Mr. Sutton replied. 'You can't shut him out on the score you have stated. Beatrix couldn't do better—and you want her to marry well.'

'Beatrix is much too sensible a girl to care for him.'

'Perhaps you don't think the same of Miss Lyon?' Mr. Sutton asked, laughingly; but Edgar Talbot only looked moody by way of a reply; so Mark deemed it prudent to turn the subject; and soon after they had all separated, as has been told.

It will easily be understood that the plan of visiting the studio was a specially obnoxious one to Edgar Talbot. He was strongly moved once or twice to set his face against Beatrix's going, and, by so doing, putting an end to the arrangement. But he remembered that if he did this it would be usurping some of the authority over his sister which he had formally vested in Mrs. Lyon. In his heart he called that lady a weak-minded, unreasoning, injudicious simpleton, for her

ready acceptance of the invitation; and the full force of his own transparent folly in having given her the reins came flooding in upon his mind. But for the time, at least, he was bound to pluck what he had planted, bitterly as it pricked him. The authority he had vested in a foolish woman must be upheld by him for his own credit's sake, until Blanche married him or married him by marrying some one else. He was quite resolved now nothing but her own will should stand between them. So, out of consideration for his own reputation for consistency, Edgar Talbot placed no obstruction in their path to the studio the following day. Nevertheless they did not reach it until an hour after the appointed time, divers unforeseen accidents and events having occurred to delay them.

In the first place, Mrs. Lyon had been smitten with a sudden doubt as to the perfect propriety of taking two young girls to see two young men. Had she made known this doubt to Edgar Talbot he would only too gladly have strengthened it into a decision against the trip. But one of those faint instincts with which Mrs. Lyon was endowed in place of reasoning powers saved her from doing the very thing that would have been most pleasing to the man she desired to please, and most distasteful to her daughter. She argued, sagaciously enough, that if she seemed to distrust herself and her own force of discrimination, that Mr. Talbot would very probably go and do likewise. On the other hand, she told herself that 'two heads were better than one,' and Blanche's being the only available head for the service, Mrs. Lyon went and not exactly consulted her daughter, but grew conversational about the difficulty.

'One really hardly knows what to do, when there are so many to think about,' Mrs. Lyon commenced, going into Blanche's room just as that young lady had finished arraying herself for the expedition. It was half-past one, and within Miss Lyon's memory her mother had never achieved the easiest toilet in less than an hour.

Blanche looked round carelessly, and saw that Mrs. Lyon had not so much as untied her cap towards getting into her bonnet, also that she had a look of being what she herself termed 'flustered.'

'What is your difficulty, mother?'

'Why, I am not quite sure that I see the good of our going to Mr. Bathurst's house.'

'It is almost a pity that you did not say so before,' Blanche replied, quietly. 'Miss Talbot is in the drawing-room, dressed, and waiting for you.'

'There it is,' Mrs. Lyon answered, triumphantly, looking round appealingly at the corner of the room as if she were requesting it to take notice of the manifold obstacles that impeded her progress through the world—'there it is! one never can do what one feels one ought to do when one has to think for so many people.'

Blanche began moving some of the scent-bottles on the dressing-table. It was a habit of hers to give her hands abundant employment whenever Mrs. Lyon launched into the illustrative style of argument and spoke of herself as 'oma.' She was always hard to follow on such occasions; she was specially hard to follow now.

'Don't let me add to your difficulties, mother,' Blanche said, patiently, after a few moments' pause. Her heart—no, but her fancy—was very much set upon this visit to the studio. Still the game was not worth the candle.

'I think you might let me speak of them, Blanche, without going off at a tangent in that way.' Mrs. Lyon used the tone of oppressed rectitude—a tone that is very hard to hear when the hearer knows very well that there is neither oppression nor rectitude in the case. The scent-bottles and one or two other trifles were moved with celerity now; and Blanche sought to check her rising anger by speculating as to whether she should ever seem a wearisome, unreasoning woman, and whether she should ever come to consider life insufficiently stocked with real trials, and so fall to the manufacture of sham ones for the stupefying

of herself, and the saddening of others.

While Blanche pondered on these possibilities Mrs. Lyon lapsed from the loftily injured into the familiarly curious tone.

'I was going to say when you went off at a tangent' (this last, as will be seen, was a favourite form of expression of the worthy lady's, who affected it partly because she had heard her mother use it, partly because it had always irritated her husband, and chiefly because she was hopelessly in the dark as to any meaning it might possibly have), 'I was going to say when you went off at a tangent in that way, Blanche, that I think Miss Talbot is a little too anxious to go and look at the pictures. Pictures, indeed! stuff and nonsense.'

'Rather premature to describe them so before you have seen them.'

'Which so? What?' Mrs. Lyon asked, lazily; and then, on Blanche curtly replying, 'The pictures,' Mrs. Lyon proceeded to set forth a lengthy statement as to how she had not meant them, and how if she had meant them, perhaps Blanche would find when she had arrived at her (Mrs. Lyon's) age that if she had done so it would not be anything so very foolish and ridiculous as she was sorry and grieved to see Blanche (like her poor dear father) chose to think everything that did not fall in with her views. When the act of accusation was read down to this point Mrs. Lyon grew a little out of breath; and Blanche (feeling very hopeless about reaching the studio now) gently protested that, as she had not given voice to any particular views, there was a shade of injustice in her mother saying that she (Blanche) was deciding that which did not meet them.

'But there, I suppose I must go,' Mrs. Lyon observed, irrelevantly, and with an air of martyrdom, when Blanche ceased speaking. The well-meaning but irritating-mannered woman was in reality pleased and feebly excited at the prospect of the little expedition, which partook of the nature of dissipation. She was pleased at the prospect;

she would have been disappointed with the keen, fresh disappointment of inexperience if the plan had come to nothing. Yet, withal, she could not refrain from doubting and demurring about it, in the hope of giving it additional importance.

'There! I suppose I must go,' she reiterated, as Blanche maintained the dead silence which is the sole safeguard such natures as hers have against domestic broils. Then Mrs. Lyon made a little business of untying her cap, and finally conveyed herself out of the room with almost a smile on her face, and with the proud conviction at her heart that she had deported herself as became the guiding star and responsible person of the Talbot household.

The girl she had left stood motionless for a few minutes, and then lifted her head suddenly, and looked at herself in the glass. 'What am I? morally or mentally wanting, that I let that sort of thing goad me into this,' she asked, as she gazed at her crimson cheeks and angry eyes; 'it's only a surface ill-humour, only a habit of querulousness, only the result of long years of anxiety, care, and disappointment on an originally mild, ductile nature; but it's detestable to me.'

The storm broke as she uttered the words 'detestable to me,' and she shivered from head to foot with the force of her own fury. For a minute she leant back against the bed-post, putting her hand up to the eyes that were blinded by the hot feeling which she would not suffer to well away in tears. There then came to her aid the reflection that this was a burden that must be borne; that it was in reality trifling ('I'd prefer a big woe, for all that,' she thought), and that, after all, other people endured worse things! So the crimson ebbed away from her cheeks, and the angry light faded from her eyes; and she was presently the brilliant, beautiful, light-hearted Miss Lyon once more, as she made her way to the drawing-room, inducting herself into a pair of silver grey gloves as she walked.

Miss Talbot was sitting there, bon-

netted and cloaked, trying to read, and betraying, in the nervous start she gave and tried to cover as Blanche entered, a hardly-subdued impatience, and a consciousness of its not being well to feel the same, that told its own tale to her sister-woman.

'I thought—I hoped it was Mrs. Lyon,' she began, putting her book down as she spoke; and Blanche saw—or fancied she saw, which comes to the same thing—that there was ever so little of the air of conscious superiority of place in the way Miss Talbot held her head up, and seemed to demand an explanation. For an instant she hesitated as to whether or not she should give it. Then—perhaps she sympathized with the impatience in some degree—she said—

'You must win your brother's forgiveness for mamma, Miss Talbot. The position is so new to her that she was overcome by a sense of her responsibility out of all sense of punctuality.'

Beatrice was softened. 'My brother, Edgar, would forgive her readily enough if Mrs. Lyon fought off going altogether, I believe,' she said, laughing. Then a half desire to make a half confidante arose, and was checked, and rose again, and finally was softly encouraged forth by Blanche.

'I didn't mean that brother. Does not Mr. Talbot—I mean I don't think Mr. Talbot cares much for art, does he?'

Beatrice shook her head. 'Not much. He said last night to me that he could exist till May without seeing the pictures, and should have thought I could do the same.'

'He does not care much for art or for artists, does he?' Blanche continued.

'Our own brother Lionel is one, you know,' Trixy said, as if it would have been the most natural thing in the world for Blanche to have forgotten that fact, though Lionel's picture was nominally one of the principal objects of the contemplated visit.

'Yes, I know,' Miss Lyon answered, hurriedly; 'but I thought—'

'Of course you could not think

of Lionel as such an artist as Mr. Bathurst, your cousin,' Trixy interrupted, in a tone that was meant to be apologetic for Lionel. Before Blanche could retort, 'I should think not,' Mrs. Lyon came in, and the two girls were saved from further misunderstanding—for the time.

Being already late for their appointment when they started, it was only in the order of things that they should be still more delayed on their way. Mrs. Lyon had a pet theory about short cuts. It was a theory that was not based upon measurement, or reason, or anything tangible, but upon the slightly illogical sentence that 'short cuts are often the longest.' So this day, when Miss Talbot gave Mr. Bathurst's address, and added, 'Through the Park and out at the Victoria Gate,' Mrs. Lyon interpolated, with considerable earnestness, 'I should say Park Lane.'

'Better through the Park,' Blanche said, quickly, settling herself back in her seat, and trying to catch Miss Talbot's eye, and telegraph something equivalent to 'Stand to your guns' to her. But the worthy intention was defeated; Miss Talbot looked at her chaperone and repeated, hesitatingly—

'Through Park Lane did, you say?'

'Yes, certainly, I should say.' Mrs. Lyon spoke affably, as became one who was victorious, and about the beneficial effects of whose victory there could be no sane doubt. Accordingly the order was given, and they drove through Park Lane, or rather did not drive through, but got into a block, and passed an uneventful twenty minutes in looking out through the carriage windows at one of Pickford's vans, which period of quiescence crushed Mrs. Lyon into an abject frame of mind, and rendered her specially alive to the vanity of all earthly joys and the transitory nature of all triumphs.

'Whenever one does anything for the best, one is sure to find that one had better have let things go their own way,' she remarked, by way of explanation, when at last they reached Mr. Bathurst's house, and the two young men came from the studio to meet them with laughing

reproaches for their being so late. And somehow or other both girls felt the explanation to be all-sufficient, and the block in Park Lane a facetious trifle, and everything as pleasant as possible, and incapable of improvement.

She would have sought to banish or explain away the fact, if it had been put before her in so many words; but it was a fact that Blanche Lyon had a better feeling of equality with these people with whom she had been compelled to come and live in a dependent position when she and they were in the society of Frank Bathurst, her cousin. She was grateful to the good-tempered, good-looking, educated, rich gentleman for being her relation. Down at the Grange, where she had been as kindly, conscientiously, and considerately treated as any girl (or, at any rate, any girl who is a governess) can be, she had still been aware that she was so treated by an effort—a tiny and admirably concealed one, certainly, but still an effort. Blanche Lyon was a girl to the full as practical and sensible as she was proud and sensitive; and so, though she recognized this fact, she at the same time recognized the impossibility of its being other than it was. The woman who stands alone, with no apparent relations, whose friends may be legion, but are invisible, cannot, and cannot expect to be treated precisely in the same way as her well-surrounded compeers. It is inevitable that there should be little distinctions; and far more injustice is awarded (in print) to the employers than to the employed. The genus 'Governess' has been idealized by ill-usage, in fiction, into a very false position. The attempt has been made to teach thousands of young women, who would have accepted obscurity as their birthright had they remained in their fathers' homes, to gird against it as a great wrong when they find it their portions in the homes of people who reward them more or less liberally for educating their (the people's) children. Blanche Lyon was not one of this order. She was too keenly alive to the perfect propriety of the mighty system of give and take to

have ever weakly wished to be looked upon as other than she was, and was remunerated for being. Nevertheless, though she had never felt the situation of the past to be other than perfectly natural and becoming, she did feel the superiority of that of the present. It was pleasant to be known as the cousin of a man of considerable mark in the set in which, however good their will, she still must be regarded as not quite one of them. It was pleasant to have him gladly and gallantly putting forward the fact of this relationship as a thing of which he had to be proud. It was pleasanter to know that she was not regarded any more as an isolated being, but rather as the most important link in the great chain of events which had made Frank Bathurst what he was. The old talk with her father, held on the subject of old Mr. Lyon's offer, came back vividly to her mind as she came into the house of 'Bathurst's boy,' and knew him for the motive-power of that meeting.

She could but rejoice in him for being what he was, and (being herself) she could but rejoice and be glad in him openly. The position can readily be realized. She liked him for being what he was, and she liked him the better for being it partly through her agency. In her rash, impulsive, chivalrous, unadvised girlishness, she had rejected the prospect which Frank had realized. More of the old conversation floated back in scraps. She had said perhaps 'Bathurst's boy might take a fancy to her,' and her father had said that 'more improbable things occurred frequently.' But, though she remembered this, no hope of its being the case now brightened the sunshine which seemed to radiate from his presence, and warm her into closer relationship with him. It gladdened her to her soul's core that he should seem taken, dazzled, fond of her. He was too bright and bonnie for the bright bonnie woman who had unconsciously helped to shape his good fortune, not to be interested in his interest for her.

While as for him, he was a man with a quick eye for the beautiful, with a keen appreciation for the

sympathetic, with a catholicity of sentiment respecting the lovable, and, as Lionel Talbot had said, with the germs of inconstancy in him. He had had the habit of loving all that was lovely from his boyhood, and the habit had got him into more than one bitterly-lamented scrape. He was musical, poetical, artistic, æsthetic altogether. It was his fate to get very fond very often. It was his fancy to be touchingly gentle to every pair of beautiful eyes and soft hands that respectively brightened and smoothed his path. His affections were not very deep; on the contrary, they were shallow, but they were marvellously wide. His voice always took a tender tone, his eyes always had a loving look in them when he addressed a young and pretty woman. It was as natural to him that it should be so as that he should gather a rose with a careful hand, or ride a fine-mouthed horse with a light rein. He was no gay deceiver. His adoration was invariably thoroughly meant as long as it lasted. His sweet words never knew a false ring. His likings did not always die away when the object disappeared: they would lay in abeyance, and would be ready to spring up greenly again when the object returned. And, with all this fickleness about them, he still thought well of women, believed in them as in beings who were infinitely purer and better than himself. It was a great element in his love that it never turned to contempt. It waned and went to sleep, but it never woke up disgusted with that it had formerly delighted in; and this must be added in its favour, that hitherto it had never fallen upon unworthy objects.

These two young women, both beautiful, both well inclined to him, neither of whom he had known a month ago, were great sources of joy to him just now. He was not a man to make plans and lay schemes. He took things as they came, and brightened them generally by his own way of looking at them. But Trixy Talbot and Blanche Lyon needed no adventitious brightening; without it they dazzled him quite sufficiently.

It was hard to say which of the two young men was the master of the house, so each girl had the satisfaction of feeling that she was the guest of a brother or a cousin especially. There was a brief discussion—a good-humoured dissension as to which should be done honour to first, the pictures or the luncheon. The first place was given to the latter eventually; and Blanche sat next to Frank Bathurst, and was made much of by him, because she made it easy for him to make much of her, by being entirely unfettered in her own manners; and Trixy's sparkling wine might have been verjuice in consequence.

For it is a fact that Miss Talbot was very much in love with the one who acted so thoroughly up to the poet's advice to young men, 'Gather ye roses while ye may;' and I, as her historian, refuse to treat it as essential to the art which is placing her before you, that good and unassailable reasons for the love be given. They are not given in real life; they are not asked for. A shallow substitute for the 'reason why' is offered occasionally by well-meaning people, who like to explain natural laws without in the faintest degree comprehending their deep significance. When a marriage comes off, and all looks fair and smooth before the newly-united pair, excellent-sounding solutions of the mystery of their love are freely offered. They were born in the same county; or they both had a well-marked preference for the melodrama over the burlesque of life; or they both liked the same books, or person, or made-dishes, or some other admirable reason for wedding. But no one ever stands forth as champion for the sufficiency of the causes which brought about the love between people who make each other miserable by falling away before marriage. The event is allowed to make all the difference; and that is wisdom and discretion if the ring be won, which is forward folly if it be not.

Therefore, for a while, Trixy Talbot must stand accused of the latter offence; for, without having any excellent reasons to give, she had

found Frank Bathurst's winning words and looks irresistible to the point of falling in love with him. Desperately in love—so desperately that all her sweet armour of self-possession and affected unconsciousness of his admiration failed her. She hung upon his accents in a way that made her seem absent and stupid; she thrilled to the touch of his hand in a way that made her afraid to resign hers to his clasp when others were by; she wearied for his words when he was silent, for his meaning when he spoke; she was vaguely jealous of every unknown woman upon whom his soft glances might have fallen in the past; she was painfully, pitifully alive to the fact of his having taken no greater trouble to make her these things than he took probably with every woman who pleased his taste. She was keenly conscious of having a formidable rival in Blanche, if Blanche chose to rival her; and how could Blanche 'but choose, with such cause for rivalry?' she asked herself, in her impassioned intuition. In fact, she was entirely in love, and so at a disadvantage. She felt sick under all the sudden alternations of unfounded hopes and despairs which assailed her, as Frank Bathurst was gallant and gay to herself or to his beautiful cousin. She shrank from the thought of the parting that would inevitably come when they had looked at the pictures and it would be time to go home to dinner. She was feverishly impatient for a new move to be made every moment. Her heart went up absurdly high when he bent down to lament her lack of appetite in low tones, coming round to the back of her chair to do it, and so seeming to make her comfort peculiarly his own. It (her heart) went down, equally without good cause, when he left her and returned to his place by Blanche; for Miss Lyon's hand was on the table, twirling a rose about, and the handsome young host put his own upon it gently, as he impressively offered his cousin something that she did not want. And Blanche, whose hand stayed steady under the touch, Blanche, whose brilliant

eyes met the very warmly admiring glance of his quite coolly, Blanche, who was so little affected by his low tones as to answer them in loud ones,—became, despite her beauty, a horrible object in poor Trixy Talbot's eyes—those sweet violet eyes that ached when Mr. Frank Bathurst used little seductive tones and airs and gestures in commending the claret to the new beauty, to whom it was meet and right and his bounden duty to show such homage, since she was his cousin.

Not that he was at all off with the comparatively old love whose figure he had sketched in for 'Venus' in the picture, the second subject from 'Tannhäuser,' which had rather put the first in the background. He liked being sweet to them both; he would have been amiably charmed by their both being sweet to him in return. He was gifted with such a mighty fund of fondness that he could not resist nourishing all the attractive recipients of the quality who came in his way. It came so easy to him to love, to be very much fascinated, and be just a little thrown out of gear, and even a little sleepless about more than one woman at a time, that he gave no thought to Miss Talbot being in the least uncomfortable, or having cause to be so. There had been soft pleasure to him in feeling sure that she had found it pleasant to have him standing by her chair, anxious to tend upon her, earnest in waiting on her. There had been equally soft pleasure to him in taking Blanche's small hand in his, when the occasion scarcely called for the act; in feeling how slender and smooth it was, and how delicate it looked resting there in his clasp; and, as he never denied himself any pleasure that might be his harmlessly, he took these, and enjoyed, and was grateful for them, like the sinless sensualist he was. And Trixy Talbot saw that he did the one and was the other, and still loved him desperately.

It has been brought as a reproach against modern fiction that a good deal of the action takes place at, and a good deal of the interest is made to centre in, the dinner-table.

In the face of this reproach, it must be declared that no sequestered sylvan glade, no moon-lighted cathedral cloisters, no whirling waltz, no number of village rambles with 'the object' in the cause of 'being good to the poor,' can ripen the sentiments which are the bricks and mortar of all novels more swiftly and surely than does the well-selected and carefully-furnished hospitable board. People are apt to get very near to each other's hearts and minds (when the guests and hosts are young, especially); all try to be at their best; and it stands to reason that men and women at their best are considerably more attractive to one another than at any other time. Flowers and wine, and wit and beauty,—and, in the present case, the unusualness of the thing,—ought to work, and do work. The little party I have been describing felt that, if they had known each other from childhood, they could not have known each other better, or liked each other more than they did under existing circumstances, when they rose at length to go and look at the pictures.

'By the way, I left my model when I came to meet you,' Frank Bathurst said to Miss Lyon, as, with her by his side, he led the way to his studio. Then he went on to tell her what a wonderful effect Lionel had succeeded in producing with the representation of waves alone. 'He's by way of being a genius: there's not a boat, or a gull, or a lighthouse, or anything but water on his canvas; and still you get pulled up before it.'

When he paid that tribute to his friend's talent, Blanche felt that there must be an immense deal in Frank Bathurst. She rendered up her hand to him with delightful readiness, as he offered to help her over the threshold, and then down the flight of steps which came between the back and front part of his studio; and she spoke out her admiration for his 'Battle of the Bards' with hearty eloquence when they paused before it.

'Now I want to show Miss Talbot something,' he exclaimed, impatiently, as he saw Beatrix walking

on with her brother; 'I hope that fellow won't point it out to her first.'

'Go and stop his doing so,' Blanche said, quickly. And Mr. Bathurst took her advice; and presently Lionel Talbot came and joined Miss Lyon, leaving his sister very happy by the act.

'There is a good deal of spirit in that,' Blanche said, waving her hand at large towards the huge canvas whereon 'Tannhäuser' was depicted, in the midst of a well-dressed mob, giving vent to the defiance—

'Grim bards of love who nothing know,
Now ends the unequal fight between us;
Dare as I dared! to Hösel go,
And taste love on the lips of Venus.'

'A great deal of spirit,' she repeated, feeling at the moment utterly unable to offer any other art criticism.

'Yes,' he replied, 'I wish Bathurst would work at it, instead of wasting his time on the other one.'

'What is the other one?'

'Come and see it.'

'No, no,' she said, as she glanced in the direction he would have taken, and saw her mother in mid-distance, and Miss Talbot and Mr. Bathurst further on: 'I want to see yours first.'

'Then come and look at it.' And he led her to the other end of the long studio; and they stood alone before the waves that had steeped his mind in admiration for their wild beauty long ago on the Cornish coast.

She stood in silence for awhile, not only averse to, but incapable now of offering an opinion, respecting the painting the more for his being the painter of it, and the painter the more for the painting being his. Letting her admiration for both react upon each other, in fact, with a subtlety that women often employ in like cases.

'What are you going to call it?' she asked, at length, abruptly.

'Frank Bathurst suggests as a motto for the Academy catalogue, "What are the wild waves saying?" do you like it?'

'Yes—were you alone when you got to love those waves?'



Drawn by W. Small.]

"QUITE ALONE."

"If he had repeated the words a dozen times she would not have been satiated with the sound of them."

[See "Playing for High Stakes."

'Quite alone,' he replied; and then as she almost seemed to sigh in relief as she looked up at him, he repeated more emphatically still, 'Quite alone.'

If he had repeated the words a dozen times she would not have been satiated with the sound of them, but would have cried in her heart, 'That strain again? it hath a dying fall.' It was music to her, sweet, full, rich, sufficient. Music to her, that assurance he gave her that the wild waves said nothing to him of one whom he had loved and looked upon when he loved and looked upon them. She was quite contented with that implied assurance—quite charmed with the fitness of the motto—quite satisfied with what the 'wild waves were saying,' and quite oblivious of Frank Bathurst. Beatrix Talbot's impulses towards Lionel had been a true one; her brother was her best friend.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DAPHNE.

There was a conservatory at the garden end of the studio. At least it had been a conservatory, but was now cleared of its plants and occupied by a dais for the models to pose upon. From one end of this part of the studio a spiral staircase led up to an observatory on the leads, where a delightful view, consisting of a bit of Bayswater and a slice of Kensington Gardens, could be had. Up this staircase the four young people walked after a time, leaving Mrs. Lyon (who had been more engrossed by the lay figures than anything else) to follow at her leisure.

'Story' the waves had 'none to tell' to her. 'Venus' on the mountain made her uncomfortable, and brought back all her doubts as to the wisdom of having come here; and the 'spirited' composition of the Battle of the Bards seemed to her simply a representation of an infernal orgie. But she took a calm pleasure in examining the magnified doll, and trying how its joints worked; thus innocently destroying some folds in the drapery which

Frank had spent a long time in arranging that morning.

'A nice room wasted—entirely wasted,' she said to herself, as she surveyed the studio. Frank Bathurst had been at considerable trouble and expense about this studio. He had first had two rooms on the ground floor thrown into one, and then he had put up a groined and vaulted oak ceiling, thus spoiling the rooms above it. It had a richly-coloured window at one end; pomegranate-hued curtains of soft sweeping velvet fell in full folds from ceiling to floor. It was enriched with oak carvings, with ebony brackets and bronzes; with perfect casts from perfect originals, with rare old glass, with a deeply-embossed shield resting on some sort of stand of metal in which Quintin Matsys had had a hand. The sunlight, what there was of it on that winter's day, fell upon the floor in broad rich masses; the shadows laid in unbroken grand depths; there was nothing slight, nothing pale, nothing puerile about the room, and Mrs. Lyon deemed it very dull.

She had been uncertain whether to go with them when they went up on the leads or to stay behind. While revolving the uncertainty in her mind, their voices sounded faintly in what seemed the far distance to her, and at the same time a tall, curiously-carved screen, drawn across in such a way as almost to cut off a corner of the room, caught her attention. So, with an emphatically-worded observation on the folly of people taking so many unnecessary steps to see so little as could be seen from the top of a house in Bayswater, Mrs. Lyon walked towards the screen, and proceeded to curiously inspect it.

It was an elaborate piece of workmanship, modern, perfectly artistic in proportion, and delicate in detail. Titania, Oberon, and Puck wreathing themselves and each other in fanciful garlands in the centre, and wood nymphs and satyrs doing nothing remarkable at the sides. 'A nicely-grained piece of wood spoilt!' Mrs. Lyon thought, as she put her hand upon it to see

whether the dimness came from dust or not (in order that she might do a good turn to the helpless gentlemen who owned it, by denouncing the dusty proclivities of their housemaid). She put her hand upon it; the screen turned easily on a swivel at the lightest touch, and it revolved, leaving the corner exposed. Mrs. Lyon uttered a little cry of mingled horror and virtuous satisfaction at having unearthed the cause of it, for there, in a large arm-chair, her head thrown back upon the 'velvet violet lining,' a pretty yellow-haired girl lay sleeping.

The girl and all the accessories were so pretty that most people would have been content to keep silence, and look on the scene as one of the fair sights in life which, perfect in themselves, may be suffered to pass by unquestioned. But Mrs. Lyon liked to grapple with difficulties that were not — loved to defend what was not assailed, delighted in putting things straight before they were crooked. 'I can scarcely believe my eyes,' she exclaimed, believing them thoroughly the while, and quite ready to do battle in the cause of their trustworthiness, should any one hint at optical delusion. 'I can scarcely believe my eyes; young woman, this is shameful!'

The girl, who had opened her eyes at the first sound, sat up at the last words and suppressed a yawn. She was dressed in a costume for which Mrs. Lyon had no precedent, though Frank Bathurst had given much thought and consideration to it; and on her bright yellow-haired head she had a little cap of black velvet, bordered with seed pearls. In fact, she was the model for the 'princess' for whose heart and hand the bards were singing; and she had fallen asleep after waiting a long time for Mr. Bathurst, and now she woke up, startled and rather cross.

'This is shameful,' Mrs. Lyon repeated; and the girl, thinking she was being rebuked for drowsiness, being indeed guiltless of every other offence, waxed petulant with the old lady who came instead of the smiling, handsome, agreeable gen-

tleman whom she (the model) had expected to see. She was a pretty girl, and her beauty was very much in favour that year; accordingly her time was fully occupied, and she was getting into the habit of giving herself little airs of conferring a favour when she kept an appointment. Moreover, she was a good deal admired in a certain dance in one of the pantomimes, for she joined the profession of ballet-girl to that of model. On the whole, it will readily be surmised that she was not likely to be meek under the reproof of Mrs. Lyon.

'Then he should have come back,' she retorted, on the supposition that she had been wanted and missed while she had been sleeping. And she pushed her bright yellow hair out of her eyes and glanced up defiantly, instead of being crushed to the ground, as Mrs. Lyon had half anticipated seeing her.

'He should have come back!' Mrs. Lyon repeated the words in sheer amazement at their audacity. 'He' was her remote relation, 'he' might be good enough to marry Blanche, if no awful discoveries were made; and this 'minx,' as she called the popular model in her wrath, dared to speak of him thus familiarly.

'It's too late for anything now, so I shall go,' the girl said, rising up and casting a glance towards the darkening shadows that were falling over the dais where she had sat a princess in the morning; then the stream of Mrs. Lyon's virtuous eloquence burst the banks of astonishment and indignation, and she poured forth a flood of words that were utterly incomprehensible, but at the same time intensely aggravating to the model.

'Too late! lost! lost! unhappy creature!'

'Oh! it's not of such consequence as that,' the girl interrupted, hastily tossing her head; then she added something relative to Mr. Bathurst missing her more than she should him — a statement which caused Mrs. Lyon to tremble and pronounce the word 'abandoned' under her breath.

As the girl leisurely put off the

jacket and tunic and velvet cap of royalty, and inducted herself into the bonnet and mantle of this period, Mrs. Lyon gazed at her, and made profound reflections to herself on the callousness which could be so unmoved under detection, and the frivolity which could attempt to disguise vice in fanciful splendour. Then she thought that it would be a good thing to remove this fair young rock on which he might split out of reach of temptation—at any rate out of reach of Mr. Frank Bathurst; and then she calculated the cost of the charitable act, and wondered whether she had money enough in her pocket to do it, before the young people came down from the roof of the house.

'If you would alter your mode of life I might assist you,' she began, drawing out her purse; and the girl, who was adjusting the bows of her bonnet-strings with great care before she went out, stared at Mrs. Lyon, as if that lady was beyond her comprehension, as indeed she was.

'Alter my mode of life? not on any account, thank you,' then she thought of her Terpsichorean triumphs, and determined to very much dazzle the old lady. 'Do you know who I am?' she asked; and Mrs. Lyon looking a horror-stricken negative at once, the girl went on glibly, 'I'm Miss Rosalie St. Clair, there—good morning,' and walked out, happily unconscious of the meaningless sound that name had for Mrs. Lyon.

The skirmish had been sharp, but brief. Mrs. Lyon had almost a feeling of triumph when she reflected on how quickly she had, as she thought, routed the fair invader. Now the danger had departed, she began to make many hazy but comforting conjectures respecting it. After all, it might not be Mr. Bathurst whom the girl had spoken of as 'he.' Mr. Lionel Talbot was very quiet; but—ah! it looked bad—very bad. She remembered now that he had eaten no luncheon. At this juncture she remembered that the girl had used Mr. Bathurst's name, which proved him the offender. 'I declare one had better be

in a lion's den at once,' she murmured, pathetically, 'and then one would know what one was about.' Then she fell to softly bewailing the combination of circumstances which had brought her into this difficulty, and wondered whether she had better tell Mr. Talbot about it, and wondered what Blanche would say *now* (Blanche being quite innocent of all former thought or speech on the subject), and 'hoped Miss Talbot would listen to advice another time' (not that any had been offered to poor Trixy), and was altogether hopeless and helpless, and overcome by a sense of responsibility.

'What could they be doing up on the leads all this time?' The leads, in Mrs. Lyon's imagination, was a place of gruesome horror, slippery, flat, with no parapet. She wished that she had gone up with them. She wished she had not let them go up at all. She wished that she could put old heads on young shoulders (this last wish not being weakened by the faintest doubt as to the great superiority of her own over every other head belonging to the party). She wished that they had all stayed at home, and that Mrs. Sutton had come with them, and a great many more totally irreconcilable things.

Meantime those on the house-top had been so happy, so entirely unconscious of the cark and care, the tumult and the strife that was raging at the foot of the spiral staircase. There was a glass erection on the leads—an eminent photographer had lived there before Mr. Bathurst took the house—and under this glass they stood about, and were happy.

Very happy, on the whole, all of them; though Beatrix Talbot went up and came down in her spirit in the sharp, sudden, unreasoning way that is specially symptomatic of the disease under which she laboured. The very manner and the very looks which won her more and more, which drew her nearer, and made Frank Bathurst dearer to her, became so many sources of irritation to Trixy Talbot. She had reached the stage when a vague feeling of the loved one being unjust is born. He had it in his power to make her so supremely happy—to exalt her,

she fondly believed, above all women—by telling her and all the world that he loved her, and he did not avail himself of it. She would have disavowed the feeling, had it been placed before her in the bald, cold words I have used. She would have disowned all connection with it, and probably have declared it to be unwomanly, forward, and vain; and she would have tried to believe that she meant what she professed, and taken herself sharply to task for venturing to love before 'the object' had asked for her formally in holy matrimony; and all the time would have gone on fretting and loving, and being happy and miserable, as it is, and has been, and ever shall be.

But though he had it in his power to make her supremely blessed, and did not seem at all likely to do it, she took the good the gods gave, and was grateful. It was something, in default of security of passing her life in the sun of his presence, to be warmed by his smiles; and he was no niggard of these, giving them lavishly when he was pleased—and he was always pleased when pretty women were by, especially if they liked him. Their beauty and his pleasure in it reacted upon each other. The better pleased they were with him the prettier they looked; and the prettier they looked the better pleased he was with them. It was a charmed circle, and Frank Bathurst delighted in drawing it closer and in strengthening it: and generally, in gathering his roses while he might—while they grew well within reach, where he could gather them easily—there was no charm in difficulty to him.

'If she slight me when I woo,
I will scorn and let her go.'

he would carol gaily, on the smallest sign of coyness—it needed not to be 'coldness'—making itself manifest in the demeanour of the Cynthia of the minute. Indeed, now it was only Blanche Lyon's more openly-shown pleasure in his society that was swaying him slightly from Miss Talbot. According to his gay, bright, practical creed, life was too short to waste one hour of it in looking for anybody's hidden motives. The

frankly-expressed joy, the readily-vouchsafed sympathy, the open preference, were so many tributes to his vanity—and his vanity was great. It was so glancing and sunny that Blanche, who to a certain extent appreciated it already, saw in it nothing to resent or regret, and so fed it a little—'pandered to it,' Trixy Talbot termed it, in her anger; for Trixy felt the vanity would be a permanent rival to her—and still would not have had the smallest change made in the man who was vain. He was a genuine 'source of joy and woe' to Miss Talbot, but he was a source of joy pure and simple to Blanche Lyon, and she showed him that he was this; and so he took the turning that should eventually lead him into error.

Mrs. Sutton had been compelled to remain away, by reason of a very unforeseen and inopportune event, which will be duly chronicled. It was an event that caused her a good deal of savage sorrow, and the sole balm she could find for the wound was, that the 'affair would be a failure without her.' She felt quite convinced in her acute mind that Mrs. Lyon would, by some over-anxiety or misapprehension, mar the 'fair form of festal day;' and she was gently pleased thereat, after the fashion of Marian. If in fancy she could have seen the quartette upon the leads, the ground would have been very much cut from under her feet.

It would be difficult to define the ingredients which went to the composition of their ecstatic satisfaction that day. It always is difficult to ascertain what makes people who are in love so superbly satisfied with each other; for they are rarely brilliant or at ease under the circumstances. But this difficulty does not do away with the fact of their being so.

Frank Bathurst, in reality the most thoughtless of the party, knew quite well why he liked it. Those two girls, with their lovely faces, good figures, and gracefully-falling draperies, alone would have been enough for him. But he had another source of pleasure. Lionel Talbot and he were attached to one another.

A good deal of boyish enthusiasm mingled itself with a good deal of genuine affection. Frank respected Lionel, valued his opinion, especially when it coincided with his (Frank's) own. They had the spirit of comradeship upon them strongly, and it pleased Frank that they should be together. When it happened so, Mr. Bathurst liked to have his taste for beauty and grace and fascination endorsed by his friend. When his friend could not endorse it, it must in honesty be added that Frank was perfectly resigned. But in this case it was palpable that their tastes matched; and Frank was not at all jealous, but magnanimous, as became him—gracious in calling Trixy's attention to the graceful bearing of the other pair leaning against one of the supports of the glass walls—nobly indifferent to the fact of Blanche lowering her voice to a tenderer tone when she addressed Lionel than Mr. Bathurst had ever heard her use to himself.

'Isn't it strange that we should all have come together. I was just going to ask you how you thought you would like my cousin, Miss Talbot—forgetting that she is my cousin, and that I mustn't express curiosity about her.'

'But you may—to me, at least; and I think I like her very very much,' Trixy replied, with a little more earnestness than she would have employed if she had thought so. "'Won by beauty"—we are all liable to be that, you know, Mr. Bathurst.'

'Yes—and she has beauty—marvellous beauty,' he answered, warming to his topic at once. 'Look at her hands—I think they're the sweetest little hands I ever saw.'

Trixy assented. Her own hands were equally pretty; but it was scarcely her place to call his attention to this fact.

'And her head!' he went on, animatedly. 'There is something wonderfully taking in the turn of her head—a way I never saw in any other woman. Do you notice it?'

He turned a questioning glance towards Trixy as he spoke. She had fixed her eyes stedfastly on the girl she believed to be her rival—

her lashes were levelled, not lowered—her brow was bent painfully, and her lips were a little more compressed than was usual. Altogether there was a look of sad, yearning interest in that love-fraught face that stirred some fibres in his heart. She was as beautiful as Blanche—quite as beautiful; and she had this brief advantage, that Blanche was engaged with some one else at the moment, and she (Trixy) was not. He felt all sorts of compliments to her on the spot, and longed to pay one without seeming abrupt.

His diffidence about it served him in good stead; for Trixy marked it, and felt it to be the most graceful one he could have paid her. 'Mrs. Lyon's patience will be exhausted,' she exclaimed, blushing a little. 'We are forgetting the time altogether. Will you ask Miss Lyon to come down?' As he moved to ask Miss Lyon 'to come down,' a bit of daphne he had worn in his coat fell to the ground. They all moved in close together. Blanche Lyon dropped her glove, and herself stooped to pick it up; and when Mr. Bathurst, the last of the party to descend, looked for it, the daphne was gone. The colour rose even to his brow, and he turned a careless ear to the sour tones with which Mrs. Lyon met her daughter, and indirectly reproached them all for having been so long.

Presently they separated, the ladies going back in bleak silence to Victoria Street, and the two men driving up to their club. Almost for the first time in his life Frank Bathurst was glad of the excuse his spirited horses gave him of concentrating his attention on them, to the neglect of Lionel Talbot, who sat by his side. He had never seen Lionel so completely resign himself to the charm of any woman's society as he had this day resigned himself to that of Miss Lyon. He (Frank Bathurst) had been void of all active feeling on the subject at the time—all feeling save that of pleasure at seeing his friend pleased. But now!—he had seen Blanche bend down for the fallen glove; and he rejoiced more in the loss of his Daphne than he had done in its possession.

THE SUBLIME SOCIETY OF STEAKS.

A FEW months ago there appeared in a periodical work, accustomed to sensational flights, the strange assertion that no instance could be adduced of a beefsteak being eaten in perfection west of Temple Bar! The unlucky wight who threw off this vain boast could know little of the gastronomic topography of the metropolis, or his knowledge must have been a light rider, and easily shaken off; since, for more than a century and a quarter has there existed a Society in the classic region of Covent Garden, formed expressly for eating beefsteaks in perfection, this being the only dish of the repast; and punch the paramount accompaniment, with the occasional addition of port wine.

Clubs have been formed for objects much less worthy than cooking and eating beefsteaks. This was laid down with much humour and particularity by Professor Wilson, in the palmy days of 'Maga.' 'How many considerations,' says the oracle, 'are requisite to produce a good rump-steak! as the age, the country, and the pasture of the beef; the peculiar cut of the rump, at least the fifth from the commencement; the nature of the fire; the construction and elevation of the gridiron; the choice of shalot, perchance; the masterly precision of the oyster sauce, in which the liquid is duly favoured with the fish. It were better if pepper and salt were interdicted from your broiling steak; and tongs only should be used in turning it. If left too long on the fire—the error of all bad cooks—the meat will be hard and juiceless. If sauce be used, it should be made hot before it is added to the gravy of the steak.' And here we are reminded that Cobbett, who was generally not a whit more choice in his meat than in his words (these, by the way, he sometimes ate), was very careful about the accompaniments to a steak. He grows indignant about old horse-radish, which eats more like little chips than like

a garden vegetable:—"So that at taverns and eating-houses, there frequently seems to be a rivalry on the point of toughness between the horse-radish and the beefsteak; and it would be well if this inconvenient rivalry never discovered itself anywhere else." Then, 'people who want to enjoy a steak should eat it with shalots and tarragon.' Cobbett adds: 'An orthodox clergyman once told me that he and six others once ate some beefsteaks with shalots and tarragon,' and that they 'unanimously voted that beefsteaks were never so eaten before.'

The earliest club with the name of 'Beefsteak' was formed in the reign of Queen Anne, when the science of cookery had made great strides. Dr. King, in his 'Art of Cookery,' humbly inscribed to the Beefsteak Club, 1709, has these lines:—

'He that of honour, wit, and mirth partakes,
May be a fit companion o'er beefsteaks;
His name may be to future times enrolled
In Estcourt's book, whose gridiron's framed
with gold.'

Estcourt, the actor, was made 'providore' of the club, and for a mark of distinction wore their badge, which was a small gridiron of gold, hung about his neck with a green silk ribbon. Chetwood, in his 'History of the Stage,' 1749, tells us: 'This club was composed of the chief wits and great men of the nation.' Dick Estcourt was beloved by Steele. Who that has read can ever forget Steele's introduction of this choice spirit, and the touching pathos of his last exit—embalmed in the pages of the 'Spectator?' Then, in No. 264, we find a letter from Sir Roger de Coverley, 'To Mr. Estcourt, at his House in Covent Garden,' addressing him as 'Old Comical One,' and acknowledging 'the hogsheds of neat port came safe,' and hoping next term to help fill Estcourt's Bumper. 'with our people of the club.' The 'Bumper' was the tavern in Covent Garden, which Estcourt opened, when Farnell spoke of him thus:—

'Gay Bacchus liking Estcourt's wine,
A noble meal bespoken;
And for the guests that were to dine
Brought *Comus, Love, and Jocus*.'

Ned Ward, in his 'Secret History of Clubs,' 1709, describes the 'Beef-steaks,' which he coarsely contrasts with 'the refined wits of the Kit-Cat,' and thus addresses them:—

'Such strenuous lines, so cheering, soft, and sweet,

That daily flow from your conjunctive wit,
Proclaim the power of Beef, that noble meat.
Your tuneful songs such deep impression make,
And of such awful, beautiful strength partake,
Each stanza seems an ox, each line a steak.
As if the rump in slices, broil'd or stew'd
In its own gravy, till divinely good,
Turn'd all to powerful wit as soon as chew'd.

To grind thy gravy out their jaws employ,
O'er heaps of reeking steaks express their joy,
And sing of Beef as Homer did of Troy.'

A few years later was established 'The Sublime Society of Steaks,' who abhor the notion of being thought a club. The society was founded in 1735, by John Rich, the patentee of Covent Garden Theatre, to whose genius we owe the comic pantomime. He was accustomed to arrange the comic business and construct the models of his tricks in his private room at Covent Garden. Here resorted men of rank, who relished the wit which hangs about the stage, and Rich's colloquial oddities were much enjoyed. Thither came Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, the friend of Pope, and commemorated by Swift in the well-remembered lines commencing with,

'Mordanto fills the trump of fame,
The Christian world his death proclaim,
And prints are crowded with his name.
In journeys he outrides the post,
Sits up till midnight with his host,
Talks politics, and gives the toast.'

He was then advanced in years, and one day stayed talking with Rich about his tricks and transformations, and listening to his agreeable gossip, until Rich's dinner-hour, two o'clock, had arrived. In all these colloquies with his visitors, whatever their rank, Rich never neglected his art. The earl was quite unconscious of the time, when he observed Rich spreading a cloth, then coaxing his fire into a clear,

cooking flame, and proceeding, with great gravity, to cook his own beef-steak on his own gridiron. The steak sent up a most inviting incense, and my lord could not resist Rich's invitation to partake of it. A further supply was sent for, and a bottle or two of wine from a neighbouring tavern prolonged the enjoyment to a late hour in the afternoon. But so delighted was the gay old peer with the entertainment, that, on going away, he proposed renewing it at the same hour and place, on the Saturday following. The earl then picked his way back to his coach, which was waiting in the street hard by. He was punctual to his engagement with Rich, and brought with him three or four friends, 'men of wit and pleasure about town;' and so truly festive was the meeting, that it was proposed a Saturday club should be held there whilst the town remained full; the bill of fare being restricted to beefsteaks, and the beverage to port wine and punch. It is also told that Lambert, many years principal scene-painter at Covent Garden Theatre, originated the club among the visitors to his painting-room, under similar circumstances to those under which Rich is said to have done. Possibly both patentee and scene-painter got up the Society. The members were afterwards accommodated with a special room in the theatre; and when it was rebuilt, the place of meeting was changed to the 'Shakespeare' tavern, where was the portrait of Lambert, painted by Hudson, Sir Joshua Reynolds's master.

In the 'Connoisseur,' June 6th, 1754, we read of the society 'composed of the most ingenious artists in the kingdom,' meeting 'every Saturday in a noble room at the top of Covent Garden Theatre'—the situation of the painting-room—and never suffering 'any diet except beefsteaks to appear. Here, indeed, are most glorious examples; but what, alas! are the weak endeavours of a few to oppose the daily inroads of fricassees and soup-maigres?' The apartment in the theatre appropriated to 'The Steaks' varied. Thus, we read of a painting-room

even with the stage over the kitchen, which was under part of the stage nearest Bow Street. At one period they dined in a small room over the passage of the theatre. The steaks were dressed in the same room, and when it was found too hot, a curtain was drawn between the company and the fire. Formerly the members wore a blue coat, with red collar and cuffs, and buttons with the initials 'B.S.'; and behind the president's chair was placed the Society's halbert, which, with the gridiron used from the formation of the Steaks, was found among the ruins after the Covent Garden fire. This gridiron is preserved in the ceiling of the room wherein the Society now dine.

Among the celebrities who came early to 'The Steaks,' were Hogarth and his father-in-law, Sir James Thornhill, stimulated by their love of the painter's art, and the equally potent charm of conviviality. Churchill was introduced by his friend Wilkes, to whom he writes on one occasion: 'Your friends at the Beefsteak inquired after you last Saturday with the greatest zeal, and it gave me no small pleasure that I was the person of whom the inquiry was made.' Charles Price was a member, and it is related that he and Churchill, with their wit, often kept the table in a roar. Mr. Justice Welsh was frequently chairman at the beefsteak dinners; and Mrs. Nollekens, his daughter, acknowledged that she often dressed his hat for the visit, trimmed with ribbons similar to those worn by the Yeomen of the Guard. The Justice was a loyal man, but discontinued his membership when Wilkes joined the Society, though Wilkes was the man at 'The Steaks.'

To 'The Steaks' Wilkes sent a copy of his infamous 'Essay on Woman,' first printed for private circulation; for which Lord Sandwich (Jemmy Twitcher) himself a member of the Society, moved in the House of Lords that Wilkes should be taken into custody. Horace Walpole writes in the same year, 1763: 'The wicked affirm that very lately at a club [The Steaks] held at the top of the

playhouse in Drury Lane, Lord Sandwich talked so profanely that he drove two harlequins out of company.' The grossness and blasphemy of the 'Essay' disgusted 'The Steaks,' by whom Lord Sandwich was expelled; and Wilkes never dined there after 1763; yet when he went to France they hypocritically made him an honorary member.

Garrick was not fond of club-life, but he was an honoured member of 'The Steaks,' and they possess among their relics the hat and sword which David wore, probably on the night when he stayed too long after dinner, and had to play 'Ranger' at Drury Lane. The pit grew restless; the gallery bawled, 'Manager! manager!' Garrick had been sent for to 'The Steaks,' at Covent Garden. Carriages blocked up Russell Street, and he had to thread his way between them. As he came panting into the theatre, 'I think,' said Ford, one of the anxious patentees, 'considering the stake you and I have in this house, you might pay more attention to the business.' 'True, my good friend,' returned Garrick, 'but I was thinking of my steak in the other house.'

At 'The Steaks' Garrick was reconciled to Colman, to which the following note refers:

'MY DEAR COLMAN,
'Becket has been with me, and tells me of your friendly intentions towards me. I should have been beforehand with you, had I not been ill with the beefsteaks and arrack punch last Saturday, and was obliged to leave the play-house.

"He that parts us shall bring a brand from Heaven,
And fire us hence."

'Ever yours, old and new friend,
'D. GARRICK.'

At 'The Steaks' one night Garrick was boasting of his regularity in ticketing and labelling plays sent to him for acceptance for performance; when Murphy said across the table, 'A fig for your hypocrisy; you know, Davy, you mislaid my tragedy two months ago, and I make no doubt you have lost it.'

'Yes,' replied Garrick; 'but you forget, you ungrateful dog, that I offered you more than its value; for you might have had two manuscript farces in its stead.' This is the right paternity of an anecdote often told of Sheridan and other parties.

Jack Richards was never absent from 'The Steaks,' unless arrested by the 'fell sergeant,' gout. He was recorder, and had to pass sentence upon those who had offended against the rules and observances of the Society; when he put on Garrick's hat, and inflicted a long wordy harangue upon the culprit; nor was it possible to see when he meant to stop. He was a most exuberant talker; but would as soon adulterate his glass of port wine with water, as dash his talk with an ungenerous remark.

Mrs. Sheridan's brother, William Linley, often charmed the Society with his pure, simple, English song, to a melody of Arne's, or Jackson's of Exeter, or a simple air of his father's. He had written a novel in three volumes, which was so schooled by 'The Steaks' that he wrote no more. A member brought a volume of the work in his pocket, and read a passage from it aloud. Yet Linley never betrayed the irritable sulkiness of a wounded author, but bore with good humour the pleasantries that played around him, and used to exclaim—

'This is no flattery; these are the counsellors
That feelingly persuade me what I am.'

Dick Wilson, whose complexion had for many years been crimsoning over the port wine of the Society, was a solicitor, and long dignified as Lord Eldon's 'port-wine loving secretary.' He stood the fire of 'The Steaks' with good humour. Another good-natured butt was Old Walsh, the 'Gentle Shepherd.' Rowland Stephenson, the banker, was another 'Beefsteaker;' as was William Joseph Denison, who sat many years in Parliament for Surrey, and died a millionaire. He was a man of cultivated tastes: we remember his lyrics in the 'Keepeaks' annual.

The golden period of the Society is generally considered to be that when Bubb Dodington, Aaron Hill,

Hoadley (who wrote 'The Suspicious Husband'), Leonidas Glover, Bonnell Thornton, and Tickell were members. John Beard, the rich tenor, who sang in Handel's operas, was President of the Club in 1784. In 1785, when the Society had been instituted just fifty years, the Prince of Wales was admitted: there was no vacancy, but the number of members was increased from twenty-four to twenty-five. The Dukes of Clarence and Sussex were also of 'The Steaks:' these princes were both much attached to the theatre—the former to one of its brightest ornaments, Dorothy Jordan.

Charles, Duke of Norfolk, was another celebrity of 'The Steaks,' and frequently met here the Prince of Wales. The Duke was a great gourmand, and used to eat his dish of fish at a neighbouring tavern, and then join 'The Steaks.' The Duke took the chair when the cloth was removed: it was a place of dignity, elevated some steps above the table, and decorated with the insignia of the Society. For the dinner, as the clock struck five, a curtain drew up, discovering the kitchen, in which the cooks were seen at work, through a sort of grating, with this inscription from *Macbeth*—

'If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were quickly done.'

His Grace of Norfolk would eat two or three steaks, fragrant from the gridiron; and when his labours were thought to be over, he might sometimes be seen rubbing a clean plate with a shalot, for the reception of another steak. The Duke was an enormous eater; he would often consume three or four pounds of steak, and after that take a Spanish onion and beetroot, chop them together, and eat them with oil and vinegar. After dinner he was ceremoniously ushered to the chair, and invested with an orange-coloured ribbon, to which a small silver gridiron was attached. At the sale of curiosities belonging to Mr. Harley, the comedian, in Gower Street, in November, 1858, a silver gridiron, which had been worn by

a member of 'The Steaks,' was sold for 1*l.* 3*s.**

In the chair the Duke of Norfolk comported himself with urbanity and good humour. Usually the President was the target at which the jests were fired, but moderately; for though a characteristic equality reigned at 'The Steaks,' the influence of rank and station were felt there. The Duke's conversation occasionally showed evidence of extensive reading, which was rarely impaired by the sturdy wine of the Society. Captain Morris, the laureate-lyrist of 'The Steaks,' usually sang one or two of his own songs. At nine o'clock the Duke quitted the chair, and was succeeded by Sir John Hippisley, who had a terrible time of it: no one spared him—even new members made their first essays upon the Baronet, than whom no man was more prompt to attack others. He quitted the Society in consequence of an odd adventure which really happened to him, and which being related by one of 'The Steaks' with malicious fidelity, raised such a shout of laughter at the Baronet's expense that he could no longer stand it.

John Kemble was one of 'The Steaks' celebrities, and upon familiar terms with his Grace of Norfolk. One evening at Norfolk House, Captain Morris having left the table early, for the lyrist kept better hours than his ducal friend, it grew late, when Kemble ventured to suggest to the Duke some significant hints as to the improvement of Morris's fortune. His Grace grew generous over his wine, and promised: the realization came, and Morris lived to the age of ninety-three to enjoy it.

It has been remarked of 'The Steaks,' that there must have been originally a wise and simple code of laws, which could have held them together for so lengthened a period. Yet they have had, during the past sixty years, a migratory time of it. Covent Garden Theatre, in which

* *Claret Life of London*, vol. i. p. 142; to which work acknowledgment is due for certain of the anecdotes related in the present paper.

the first steak was broiled, was destroyed by fire in 1808; the first gridiron, which had long been enshrined as one of the *Penates* of the club, was saved; but the valuable stock of wine shared the fate of the building, and the archives of the Society perished. Herein it was customary to set down the good things said at 'The Steaks,' and register the names of the early members. After the fire at Covent Garden the 'Sublime Society' was re-established at the Bedford Hotel, until Mr. Arnold had fitted up apartments for their reception at the English Opera House. Here they continued to meet until the destruction of that theatre by fire, in 1830. Thus, twice burnt out, they returned to the Bedford; and their old friend Mr. Arnold, in rebuilding his theatre, the Lyceum, had a dining-room provided for them of a very characteristic order. Mr. Cunningham has appropriately termed it 'a little Escorial in itself.' The doors, wainscoting, and roof, of good old English oak, are studded with gridirons, as thick as Henry VII.'s Chapel with the portcullis of the founder. Everything assumes the shape, or is distinguished by the representation, of the emblematic implement—the gridiron. The cook is seen at his office through the bars of a spacious gridiron, and the original gridiron of the Society (the survivor of two terrific fires), holds a conspicuous position in the centre of the ceiling.

The portraits of several worthies of the 'Sublime Society' have been painted. One brother hangs 'in chains,' as Arnold remarked, in allusion to the civic chain which he wears. His robe drew from Lord Brougham, one of 'The Steaks,' on being asked if the portrait was a likeness, the remark, that it could not fail of being like him, 'there was so much of the *fur* (thief) about him.'

We have spoken of the brotherhood equality of the Society, and may as well note that the junior member has a duty accordant with his station. Thus the noble and learned lord, whom we have just mentioned, has been seen emerging

from the cellar with half-a-dozen bottles in a basket! And the Duke of Leinster, who is now the president of the Society, has, in his turn, taken the same duty. Morris continued to be the laureate of 'The Steaks' (the other day he was irreverently called a poet 'by courtesy') until the year 1831, when he bade adieu to the Society. He was then in his eighty-sixth year.

Morris revisited the Society in 1835, when he was presented with a large silver bowl, affectionately inscribed. He then addressed the brotherhood. There was still another effusion on the treasured gift:—

'And call to my Muse, when care strives to pursue,
'B-ing the Steaks to my memory, the Bowl
to my view.'"

Morris was staid and grave in his general deportment. There is, in the collection in Evans's Music-room in Covent Garden, a portrait of the bard—a poor performance, but a likeness. A better portrait, from the family picture, is engraved as a frontispiece to 'Club Life of London.' Moore, in his Diary, tells us of Colman being at 'The Steaks,' 'quite drunk,' making extraordinary noise when Morris was singing, which much disconcerted the bard. Yet he could unbend. We remember to have heard him strike a pianoforte at a music-seller's, and sing, 'The Girl I left behind Me.' he was then past his eightieth year. Curran said to him one day, 'Die when you will, Charles, you will die in your youth.'

Morris's ancient and rightful office at 'The Steaks' was to make the punch. One of the members describes him at his laboratory at the sideboard, stocked with the various ingredients. 'Then smacking an elementary glass or two, and

giving a significant nod, the fiat of its excellence; and what could exceed the ecstasy with which he filled the glasses that thronged round the bowl, joying over its mantling beauties, and distributing the fascinating draught—

"That flames and dances in its crystal bound."

Morris's allegiance to 'The Steaks' was undivided. Neither hail, nor rain, nor snow-storm kept him away; no engagement, no invitation, seduced him from it. He might be seen 'outwatching the bear' in his seventy-eighth year, when nature had given no signal of decay in frame or faculty.

'The Steaks' partake of a five o'clock dinner every Saturday, from November till the end of June. The Society consists of noblemen and gentlemen, twenty-four in number; every member has the power of inviting a friend.

With the enumeration of a few memorials, we conclude. Formerly the gridiron was a more prominent emblem of 'The Steaks' than at present. The table-cloths had gridirons in damask on them; the drinking-glasses were engraved with gridirons, as were the plates; just as the orchestra decorated the plates at Vauxhall Gardens.

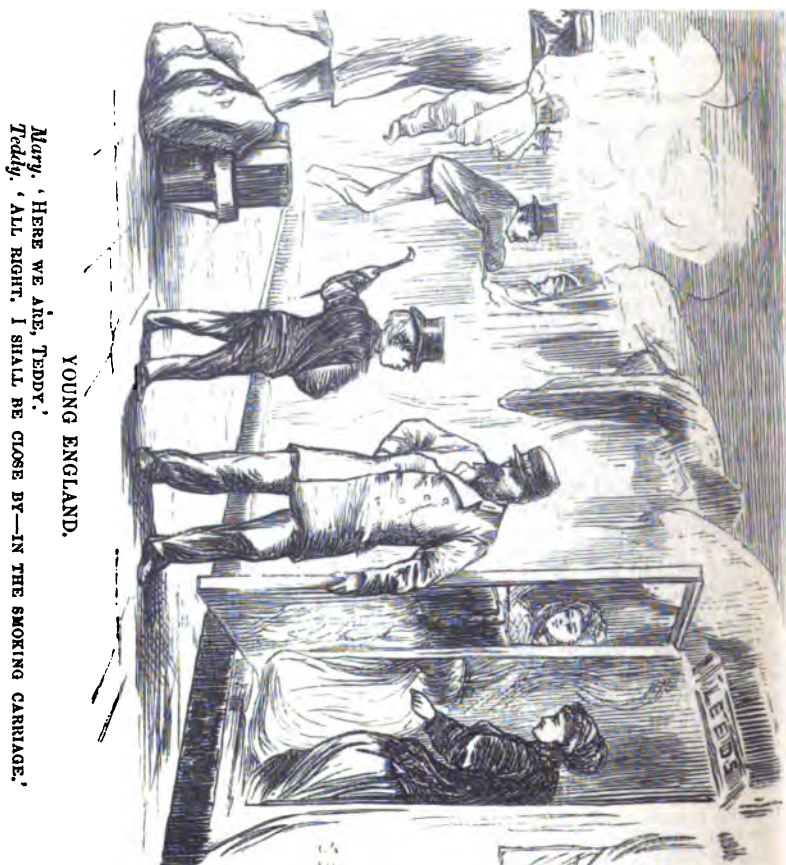
Among the presents made to the Society are a punch-ladle from Barrington Bradshaw; six spoons from Sir John Boyd; a mustard-pot from John Trevanion, M.P.; two dozen water-plates and eight dishes, given by the Duke of Sussex; cruet-stand, given by W. Bolland; vinegar-cruets, by Thomas Scott; Lord Suffolk has given a silver cheese-toaster—toasted or stewed cheese being the wind-up of 'The Steaks' dinner.*

* 'Club Life of London,' vol. i. p. 149. 1866.

CASTLES IN THE AIR.

YOUTH, build thy castles in the air—
 Live—and you'll find, as I have found,
 The ruins of those structures fair,
 Heaps of cold ashes on the ground,
 To scatter to the evening air,
 Or—on the sackcloth of despair.

W.



YOUNG ENGLAND.

Mary. 'HERE WE ARE, TEDDY.'
 Teddy. 'ALL RIGHT. I SHALL BE CLOSE BY—IN THE SMOKING CARRIAGE.'

LONDON SOCIETY.

APRIL, 1867.

BOATING LIFE AT OXFORD.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW CAPTAIN.

MOST people who know anything of Oxford, know that of all the amusements of the place, boating is the most absorbing, and the most keenly pursued. Not only on bright summer evenings, but through the damp mists of November, and the frost and sleet of February, the river from Folly Bridge to Ifley Lock is covered with craft of all descriptions, from the quiet 'dingey' to the stately 'eight.' Whatever be the attractions to be found elsewhere, whatever be the state of wind or weather, be it rain, hail, or snow, as long as boats can live, boats are launched, and the regular frequenters of the river pursue their daily recreation, or, rather, their daily business, for business it is; more or less absorbing with different men, but a business with all. Probably most people, who are connected either as friends or relatives with Oxford men, know thus much about Oxford boating; but few understand why its influence so widely pervades Oxford life, and its spirit so deeply enters into every Oxford man, whether he take part in it personally or no. Of course Jones's sisters are delighted to hear that he is going to row 'Bow of the 'Varsity' this year, and they like the excitement of getting up in the twilight to go and see the race; possibly they know what is meant by a 'bump,' and a 'stroke;' but why John should think so much of his

boat making a 'bump,' why he should speak of rowing in the Eight at Putney as preferable to any number of first-classes, they cannot understand. And Jones's father, from his oracular post on the hearthrug, says, 'Boating is a fine, manly exercise, but he hopes John will not allow it to interfere with his studies, and make a business of what should only be a pastime.' So that, on the whole, Jones feels that on the subject dearest to his heart he does not receive much sympathy in the domestic circle. Now this want of interest in a pursuit which engages much of the time and energies of young men of both our great universities, is surely to be regretted, and is, in fact, regretted by many. It is not, of course, to be expected that those who do not engage personally in a pursuit should feel an equal interest in it with those who do; but it seems both possible and desirable that they should understand how that interest arises, and is so constantly maintained among university men of every variety of taste and every degree of muscular development. I purpose, therefore, to attempt, in a few sketches of boating life and boating men, to illustrate without exaggeration, and sometimes by scenes from real life, the important position that boating holds at Oxford, to account for the enthusiasm it creates, and to mark the nature of its influence on the life of

an Oxford man. I shall begin, without further preface, with some account of

A COLLEGE MEETING.

On the morning of the 22nd of January, 18—, the following notice was posted on the inside of the College gates:—

‘St. Anthony’s College Boat Club. A meeting of the Club will be held on Monday evening next, in Mr. Maclean’s rooms, at nine o’clock, to elect a Captain, and transact other business of importance.

(Signed), ‘CHARLES THORNHILL,
‘Captain.’

I, Tom Maynard, a freshman, read this notice, in common with the rest of the College, as I walked forth for a morning stroll between Chapel and breakfast. Looking back at myself as I was then, I believe I may say without vanity that I was pretty much what a freshman ought to be. I had a proper reverence for senior men, a proper wish to support the institutions of my college, especially the College boat, a desire to avoid ‘a bad set,’ and a wholesome fear of doing anything that might seem ‘fresh,’ or might cause me to be considered cheeky or presumptuous. I had, therefore, some doubts, after reading the notice of meeting, as to whether, in spite of having the day before paid a subscription of *2l. 2s.*, I was entitled to take part in the august deliberations of the St. Anthony’s Boat Club. However, having taken counsel with a brother freshman, who, being of a more bustling temper than I, made more blunders, but got his information on things in general quicker than I did, I learned that I might consider myself a full-blown member of the club, with a right to ‘speak, vote, and blow up the officers, and propose anything, my dear fellow,’—such were his words—‘propose yourself for captain, and me for stroke of the Eight, if you like.’ After this assurance from my friend Wingfield, an enthusiastic and mercurial man, whose soul ‘o’er-informed its tenement of clay,’ the said tenement weighing under seven stone, I determined to go to

the meeting, and to the meeting I went.

It was ten minutes after nine o’clock when I reached Mr. Maclean’s rooms. Business had not yet commenced, but there was a tolerably good muster already. Men of all sizes were lounging about the room, some disposing their limbs in the most luxurious manner on easy chairs and sofas, some leaning against the high oak mantelpiece, some perched on tall seats in the window; about half were smoking, and several huge tankards of beer were passed round the room from time to time, and were saluted with much gusto. ‘Look here,’ said Wingfield, who sat next me, and took his pull at the beer with the air of an old hand, ‘this cup is to commemorate the year when we won everything at Henley—the Grand Challenge, the Ladies’ Plate, the Stewards’, and the Diamond Sculls. Rather good, wasn’t it, old boy? And d’ye see that big thing with a lid to it? They say a man once drank it right off in Hall: it very nearly killed him, and no wonder, for it holds more than two quarts; but he’s all right now; a parson somewhere in the country, I believe.’ While Wingfield was giving me this information in an under-tone, there was plenty of chaff going about the room, and an occasional bit of ‘bear-fighting,’ which I may describe, for the benefit of the uninitiated, as a friendly interchange of compliments, taking the form of wrestling, heaving of sofa-cushions, &c.

At the table, with a large moderator, and pens, ink, and paper before him, sat the captain, conferring gravely with the secretary, who sat at his right, on the business about to be transacted.

‘I say, Barrington,’ shouted the captain to one of the men in the window, ‘just sing out once more, and if no one else turns up, we’ll begin.’

Barrington upon this opened the window, and called out in tones varying from a cracked tenor to a tragic bass, the single monosyllable ‘Drag.’ Having done this about a dozen times, apparently to his own immense enjoyment, he closed the window, and

awaited the result of his efforts. 'The Eight are not all here,' said a sharp voice. 'I hope you'll fine those who are away, Thornhill; it's the rule, you know.' 'All right, Tip, it's only old Five; he's always late, but he's sure to come.'

'Oh! here you are, at last,' cried Tip, as the door opened, and a very large body, surmounted by a good-humoured and rather handsome face, with a short pipe in its mouth, loafed into the room. 'You're just in time. You'd have been fined in another second.'

'I'll break your neck when I get near you, young 'un,' returned Number Five. 'I hope I'm not late, Thornhill; there was a rattling brew of bishop going in Jackson's rooms, that was too good to leave.'

'Of course; we knew you must be lushing somewhere,' put in Tip.

'Will you shut up?' replied the big man, threatening him with the tankard he had taken up on first entering the room. 'The fact is, captain, I believe I'm like those things in the Greek Testament, that stumped me in the Schools the other day, containing two or three firkins apiece.' 'Ah!' said Thornhill, 'only very little of it is water; however, sit down, and we'll begin. Order, order!'

At this all hats went off, and everybody listened.

'Gentlemen,' said Thornhill, 'before we proceed to the main business of the evening, the secretary will read the annual statement of accounts.'

Hallett, the secretary, then rose and made a brief and not very lucid statement, from which it appeared that the club was not more than 150*l.* in debt, and there was great hope that, with careful management, the debts might be easily paid off in the course of a few years.

When the 'Hear, hear,' that greeted the secretary's statement had subsided, Thornhill rose again and said, after scraping his throat more than once, 'Gentlemen, I have now to resign the captaincy of the club, and to ask you to elect a fresh man in my place.'

Although every one had known long before that the captain was

going to resign, no one seemed to have realized the fact till now, and there was silence all through the room.

'If that were all,' continued Thornhill, 'I should not trouble you with a speech; but, as I shall leave the College to-morrow, and be on my way to India probably within a fortnight, I want to say a word or two before I go.'

He spoke the last sentence quickly, as if he feared his voice might fail him before he got to the end of it, and then paused and looked hard at the tablecloth.

'Pass that beer,' exclaimed the ever-thirsty No. Five, whose name, by-the-by, was Baxter. 'Young Tip, you're not fit to live.'

Tip took a long pull himself, and then passed the tankard, taking care to keep well out of reach of Baxter's arm.

'No man in the College,' continued Thornhill, raising his eyes, 'will ever leave it with more regret than I shall. I have passed a happier four years here than I ever did or ever shall pass again. I have made a good many friends who will last me my life.' ('Hear, hear,' and 'Rather, old fellow,' from Baxter.) 'And I think that every one here at least wishes me well.' (Loud cheering all round the room, in which Wingfield and I joined with great enthusiasm.) 'I thank you with all my heart for your kindness,' Thornhill went on, 'and I'll never forget it; and wherever I may be, I'll try and do credit to the old place.' Here every one cheered lustily, and then Thornhill began again in a firmer tone. 'And now, gentlemen, before I go, I want to say something about the boating of the College. Our Eight stands higher on the river now than it has stood for the last ten years' (great cheering); 'and with such men as Hallett and Baxter to pull the boat along, it ought to go higher still.' ('Hear, hear.') 'I wish to thank those gentlemen and all the members of the Eight, for the goodwill they have always shown me, helping me, both in the boat and out of the boat, to get the Eight well up on the river. They have always been

willing to submit their judgment to mine, and have trained, with one or two exceptions, conscientiously throughout.' ('Aha! Bags,' said Tip, *sotto voce*, to Baxter, 'that's one for you. Who drank beer at eleven o'clock in the morning?') 'I hope the next captain may be able to say the same; there is not a grander thing to be seen in the world than a set of men yielding obedience of their own free will to a ruler of their own choosing. Depend upon it, if all the men of the College work well together, and keep up good training and discipline, the boat will go to the head of the river, and the reputation of the College all round will rise with it. You may be sure, when I am out in India, that I shall watch eagerly for any news of the College, and the College boat; and shan't I make a rush at "Bell's Life," whenever I get a chance, to see what the Eights are doing! If I could only see our boat row head of the river, I think I shouldn't mind if I died the next minute.'

Then Thornhill sat down, and the cheering was long and loud. When it was over, we proceeded to the election of a new captain. A slip of paper was handed round on which each wrote the name of the man he considered fittest for the captaincy.

'I shall vote for Hallett,' said I to Wingfield. 'He's the right man, isn't he? Stroke of the Eight, you know.'

'Well, I don't know,' returned Wingfield. 'I rather think I shall vote for Percy, the little man they call "Tip";' he steered the 'Varsity Eight; Hallett is not a 'Varsity oar.'

I think Wingfield had a secret ambition to steer the 'Varsity Eight himself, and wished to create a precedent for his own election to the captaincy; and perhaps there was a similar feeling in my own secret bosom, when I voted for Hallett. The voting-papers were now collected, and Thornhill announced the result—'Mr. Hallett is elected by a large majority.' Then he retired and seated himself in a quiet corner by Baxter, and Hallett took the chair amid hearty cheering.

'Gentlemen,' said Hallett, rising as soon as there was a calm, 'I

thank you with all my heart for the honour you have conferred upon me, the greatest honour you could confer, and one that, I don't mind saying, I have wished for many and many a time. I hope I shall do credit to the post—at any rate I'll try.' ('Of course you will, old boy,' from Baxter.) 'However, I won't make any promises now, but just say a word about old Thornhill, who is leaving us. Most of us here know him well; and I can tell those who don't, that he's the best man, the truest friend, and the pluckiest oar that ever stepped. His rowing last year at Putney, bow of the Eight, was a treat to see, and he was the only man in the boat whose back was as straight as a board when the boat passed Hammersmith Bridge. I have often heard it said, "Oh, everybody knows, Thornhill is the best oar in Oxford for his size." ('Wouldn't you like that to be said of you?' said Wingfield to me. 'Rather!' I replied; and all my soul was in the word.) 'No one,' went on Hallett, 'ever loved the College with all his heart like Charlie Thornhill; and he may be sure the College will not forget him; and whenever any success turns up, and we win a prize or gain a place on the river, our first thought will be "Won't old Thornhill be pleased at this?" It will keep his spirits up, if ever they are down, to know that the old place remembers him kindly, and that, whenever his name is mentioned among the old men who have left us, whether in a toast at supper, or over a quiet glass of wine, he will always be spoken of as "dear old Thornhill." And now, gentlemen, let us give him musical honours and three times three.'

All rose at once; and Baxter, who had been patting Thornhill on the back throughout Hallett's speech, with more or less vigour, according to the variation of his feelings, led off in a stentorian voice, with 'He's a jolly good fellow,' &c., in which we joined with all our might. Then followed such cheers as I never heard in all my life before, prolonged till we were all hoarse, and nearly deaf. Thornhill sat all the

time in the same corner by the window with a half-smile on his face, trying not to show the emotion he really felt. After the cheers, Baxter, who by this time was getting excited, proposed 'Auld lang syne,' which was sung with fresh enthusiasm. Then every one crowded to shake hands with Thornhill, and wish him good-bye; and I, on the strength of having been coached by him two or three times in a tub pair-oar, grasped his hand like the rest, and thought it the greatest honour I ever received. Then Thornhill left the room with Baxter, and I saw something very like a tear in the corner of his eye as he went. And so the meeting ended, and I went to my room with a flushed face, and a tumult of thoughts in my brain, which kept me awake till near morning.

CHAPTER II.

OUR 'TORPID.'

As few people, in all probability, know what is meant by a 'Torpid,' it may be as well to begin with a brief explanation of that rather unattractive term. There are two periods of the year at which races regularly take place between the eight-oared boats of the various Colleges in Oxford, namely, March and May. In May crews formed of the best eight men that can be got together out of each College, and called *par excellence* the 'Eights,' race against each other for the headship of the river, or strive to come as near it as they may. In March the racing of the second best boats takes place: these boats are the 'Torpids.' Why so called none can tell; the origin of the name is veiled in mystery, which it would seem to the present writer sacrilege to attempt to penetrate. No one who has rowed in his College Eight of the previous year is allowed to row in a Torpid, so that the Torpid crews are formed chiefly of the fresh blood of the year, and, as showing what is the new material in each College, the Torpid races possess a peculiar interest for the rowing community of Oxford. So much for explanation, which, however necessary, is

likely to be dull. I shall now proceed with the history of the St. Anthony's Torpid for the year 18—.

We had always been proud of our Torpid; I say 'we,' for, though at the time I speak of I was but a freshman, I felt myself heir to all the old traditions of the college, and a good Torpid was one of the oldest. Whatever our pick of men might be, whatever bad luck we might have—and we had our share—we had always worked hard and made the best of it; and we could, and often did say with pride, that never since we first put on a Torpid had we fallen so low as to take it off. The year before I came up to St. Anthony's our boat had moved up from ninth to fifth on the river, and the prowess of the crew was well remembered at every festive gathering in the College. This year, however, our prospects were not of the brightest; our best men had been drafted into the Eight, and the freshmen of the year were not a promising lot; or, according to Baxter, who, like most big men, inclined to a desponding view of things, 'no good at all.'

'Why, look here, young 'un,' I heard him say to the more sanguine Tip, 'I coached that big lubber Wilkinson every day last term to try and make something of him, and all he does now is to put his oar in deep, and pull it out with a jerk.'

'Well but, my dear fellow,' returned Tip, 'all that bone and muscle must be got to work somehow, and I'm sure the man's willing enough; besides, just think what an awful duffer you were yourself when you began to row; by Jove, I shall never forget your plaintive old face when Thornhill was pitching into you for not keeping your arms straight!'

'No more of that, Tip, or I'll scrag you,' replied Baxter, as Tip began an imitation of his first essay in rowing; 'I'll have another turn at the big duffer, but it's my belief the boat will be bumped three times with the crew we've got at present. Come along; it's time we were down at the barge.'

From the time when Thornhill

resigned, and said good-bye, the boating spirit had entered deeply into my soul, and I made a strong resolve that, if perseverance and hard work could do it, I would some day be a good oar. I had learned something about the handling of an oar on the river near my own home, and by dint of hard practice and plenty of coaching achieved at last what was then the dearest wish of my heart, a place in the St. Anthony's Torpid. Wingfield, being by far the lightest man in the College, and possessing that quickness and self-confidence which is indispensable in a coxswain, was learning the art of steering, and was pretty sure to keep his position in the stern of the boat.

It wanted now three weeks to the first day of the races, and I was seated in the window of my rooms, which were on the ground-floor, pegging away at Euripides for the 'smalls' that loomed in the distance, when I was aware of Hallett and Baxter talking at a short distance from me.

'Have you considered, old man,' began Baxter, 'that it only wants three weeks to the races, and the Torpid's not made up yet?'

'Yes, I know,' replied Hallett, 'it's an awkward state of things; the men ought to go into training to-morrow, but it's no use without having the crew settled, and especially stroke.'

'Just so,' said Baxter, rather indistinctly, for he had a cigar in his mouth. 'Well, what's to be done? We must try somebody; there's Wilkinson will do well enough for five; I must say he's turned out better than ever I expected, and Vere is pretty good at six, and Hilton makes a fair two, but none of them would do for stroke.'

'Well, there's young Maynard,' observed Hallett, reflectively; at that I pricked up my ears, and Euripides and smalls vanished into thin air. 'He's not the best oar in the boat,' continued Hallett, 'but he has the most pluck and go about him of any; suppose we try him to-day. Whereabouts does he hang out? Hallo!' he went on, in a lower tone, 'isn't that his name

over the door? If he's in, he must have heard all we've been saying.' With that he knocked, and both entered.

'Good morning, Maynard; I expect you heard what Baxter and I were talking about outside.' I turned rather red, and confessed I had. 'Well,' said Hallett, 'you see we want you to row stroke to-day, and if you get on all right we'll begin training to-morrow.'

'You mustn't be surprised, you know,' said Baxter, 'if you're sent back to your old place.'

'Oh, of course not,' replied I, meekly, 'but I'll do the best I can to keep my place at stroke.'

'All right,' returned Hallett; 'mind you're down in time—three o'clock sharp, you know,' and he and Baxter left the room.

I remember, as if it were yesterday, the feeling of mingled pride and misgiving with which I stepped into the boat that afternoon to row stroke. I felt as if all the river would be watching every turn of my oar, and, as the boat went swinging down the stream, I fancied I could hear the men on the barges saying to each other, 'Here comes St. Anthony's; so they've got a stroke at last; wonder what he's like.' Baxter's voice on the bank, however, soon recalled me to my senses. 'Not so quick, Stroke!' 'Keep your feather down!' 'You're missing the beginning!' and so on, at intervals, all the way down.

At Iffley we turned and began the row up, Hallett and Baxter, not to be shaken off, keeping up a raking fire from the bank. 'Put your back into it, five.' 'Mind the time, three.' 'Slowly forward, two.' 'Hallo, Wingfield, mind what you're about; look ahead, steer in shore; by Jove there'll be a smash!' 'Look ahead,' cried Wingfield, suddenly jumping up in the utmost excitement. 'Easy all! Hold her!'

In another second we felt a shock all through the boat; there was a crash of oars, and we were pitched head first into the water.

'I—can't—swim,' panted Wingfield, as he came to the surface, and, before I could seize him, disappeared again. In a few seconds the

small head rose once more, and this time I managed to grasp the little man by the collar, and, with some trouble, got him astride of the boat, which lay bottom upwards on the water. The rest had by this time got ashore, and I now followed them, leaving little Wingfield, by no means sure of his seat, on the boat, the water streaming from him on all sides, and altogether looking the most comical picture possible. He was soon rescued by a punt, and then we all ran back to our barge to change our wet flannels and keep the cold off by a nip of brandy at the Boat-House Tavern.

'Well, Wingfield, you made rather a mess of your steering just now,' said Hallett; 'you and the cox. of the other boat both lost your heads.'

Wingfield looked very crest-fallen.

'Well, never mind,' said Hallett; 'how are you now?'

'Oh, all right, thank you. You see, I can't swim, so I was rather in a funk at the time.'

'Yes, anybody could see that,' remarked Tip, who had enjoyed the whole thing immensely. 'When you were safe astride of the boat, you looked just like John Gilpin when his horse ran away.'

'I hate that fellow Tip,' said Wingfield to me immediately afterwards, 'don't you? No, of course you don't, you never hate anybody, why should you? It's only small men who've reason to hate; they're obliged to do it in self-defence. But, old fellow, I haven't thanked you yet for pulling me out of a watery grave; you may be sure I sha'n't forget it, and I'll pay you back some day when I get the chance.' I could tell by the tone of his voice that he meant more than he said, and I felt that from that day the little 'Torpid' coxswain was the firmest friend I had.

As we walked up from the river, Baxter said, 'Maynard, we've settled that you'll do for stroke, and the crew is to go into training to-morrow. Breakfast in Hallett's rooms to-morrow morning, and mind everybody has a good walk first. Wingfield, you'll have to see that all the crew are off to bed by half-past ten.'

And so the business of training began, and beef and mutton twice a day was our food for nearly a month. I shall not now enter into the details of that training; how 'bow' was ill, or fancied he was, for three days; how Vere was nearly turned out of the boat for being out of bed at midnight; how Wilkinson turned sulky, and spread a spirit of mutiny among the crew; and how Hilton once ate buttered toast for breakfast, and caper-sauce with his boiled mutton, all which particulars, however momentous in the eyes of the St. Anthony's Torpid then, would doubtless be tedious to the general reader. Suffice it to say, that the first day of the races found us all in excellent fettle and high spirits, and even Baxter was fain to confess that we had improved immensely in the last week, and might make a bump or two. Does everybody know what is meant by a 'bump'? Very likely not. So, at the risk of being considered a bore, I shall take the liberty to explain.

The Torpid races are conducted in the manner following. At the part of the river where the start takes place a number of posts are placed along the bank 160 feet apart, and by one of these each boat takes its station according to the order of the previous year, the head boat being highest up the river, the second 160 feet behind it, and so on to the last. To each post a rope is made fast, one end of which, having a large bung attached, is held by the coxswain of the boat. When the starting-gun fires, the bungs are dropped, and each boat starts in pursuit of the one before it. Any boat overtaking another, so as to touch any part of it, makes a 'bump.' Both boats lay to out of the way of those behind, and on the following day the 'bumping' boat takes its station above the 'bumped,' and tries to overtake the next boat, and so on through the six days of the races. With this explanation the reader will, I trust, understand the particular races I am about to describe.

At two o'clock on one of those damp, 'muggy' days, which are only too common in Oxford, the St. An-

thony's crew, clad in white flannel trimmed with the college colours, walked down to the barge for their 'preliminary paddle.' Flags flying on all the barges, and the bran-new uniforms of the various crews, made the scene gay in spite of the sombre hue of the sky, but the faces of the men, anxious even to paleness, showed that there was some serious business on hand.

'Now then, tumble in, you fellows,' shouted Baxter; 'you'll want time to breathe between the paddle and the race.'

That paddle did us a world of good in keeping our thoughts off the coming race; but when it was over, we had still a quarter of an hour to wait before rowing down to the start. It was a terrible quarter of an hour for me, for being stroke of the boat, I felt as if the whole responsibility lay on my shoulders, and as the minutes—hours they seemed—went on, the deep red spot in my cheek grew deeper and deeper, and a sort of shuddering came over me, till my teeth seemed to rattle in my head. We all tried to laugh and chaff as usual, but it was a ghastly attempt, and we gave it up as if by mutual consent.

'Time to start,' sung out Tip at last, and out we came to the boat's side with right good will. 'Where's Number Two? That fellow's always late; has anybody seen him?'

'He was loafing down the bank five minutes ago,' said Hilton.

'Then why the deuce didn't you bring him back? You'll all be late at the start, and have to row up in your coats.'

Two or three men were despatched to find the missing one, but minute after minute went by, and he did not come. Hallett and Baxter had gone down to the start, and Tip, left in charge, was wild.

'Ten minutes to three; you won't be down in time; the first gun fires at three; all the boats are off, except Brasenose, now. Confound that fellow Vere!' and Tip was proceeding to use still stronger language when Vere, looking wonderfully unconcerned, made his appearance.

'I'm afraid I'm rather late,' he began.

'Late! I should think you were; where the deuce have you been? But never mind now; jump in, and let's get off, we've no time to lose.' And off we went.

We had to row pretty fast, for it was nearly a mile to our starting-post, and, as Tip said, there was no time to be lost. The first gun fired just before we reached our post, and when we did we had still to turn, and it is no easy thing to turn a boat fifty feet long without a keel, and with no room to spare. At last we were safely round, and lying under the bank, a good deal out of breath from the row down and the fear of being too late.

'Two minutes gone,' sung out our timekeeper on the bank, and the words were echoed all along the line of boats. 'Plenty of time,' said Hallett, who held the stern-rope, ready to pay it out at the last minute. 'Keep your heads, and do exactly what I tell you, and mind, no one else says a word. Baxter, be ready to shove her off in the bows.' It took a great deal to make Hallett nervous. 'Three minutes gone.'

'Take your coats off,' said Hallett again. We flung our coats to the men on the bank, and made ready for the struggle with scarcely a word. 'Now shove her out and pass her up a little: steady, that will do. The wind's blowing on shore; mind you keep those stroke oars clear of the bank, Baxter.'

'Four minutes gone,' shouted the timekeeper, and at the same instant came the crack of the second gun, that sent the blood back to my heart. 'Steady now, all; don't look out of the boat.'

'Five seconds gone.' 'Keep her well out, Baxter.'

'Ten seconds gone—15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40.' 'Paddle up all—gently—steady now'—'45, 50.' 'Look out, Baxter, she's drifting in again'—'51, 52.' 'Get forward all, and look out for the flash. Shove her out, Baxter, for heaven's sake!'—'55,' and the bows of the boat were pointing in shore. Baxter, in desperation, plunged into the

water, and, seizing one of the oars, shoved us out only just in time. '58, 59.' I heard no more. We were off, that was all I knew, and the race had begun. For the first few strokes I was unconscious of everything, even of the shouts on the bank, but my senses soon came back, and I began to realize the work cut out for me. The shouting on the bank was tremendous, lulling sometimes for a moment, and then swelling again into a loud, confused roar.

'You're gaining now,' was the first clear sound I heard. It was Baxter's stentorian voice. 'Quickened up, stroke, and you'll catch them under the willows.'

I quickened, and the shouts on the bank told me we were getting nearer and nearer; but Oriel put on a fresh spurt, and though we continued to gain, it was but slowly. 'Well rowed, St. Anthony's! You're gaining again! Give it to her! Well rowed!' Still there was no bump: the excitement that had stimulated us was cooling now, and the work began to tell. My wind seemed utterly gone, and I felt as if I could give up the race, anything rather than go on at this killing pace.

We were under the willows now; my arms seemed giving way, and my heart died within me, as I thought of the distance we had yet to row. But then came the thought of the glory of a bump, and I said to myself 'Now Maynard, my boy, only three minutes more; die rather than shut up;' and with that my wind seemed to come back, and I put on another spurt with all the strength I had. The crew picked it up well, and little Wingfield in the stern urged us on with all his might. 'Stick to it! You must do it now! Lay it on! Now for it!' he cried, and then stuck his whistle between his teeth and blew with a will. That was the signal for our final effort. I set my teeth and tugged as I had never tugged be-

fore; the voices on the bank grew louder and more confused, our oars went slashing through the water, and our boat tossed like a cork in the wash of the boat before us. 'Three strokes more, and you're into them,' shouted Wingfield. There was a loud roar on the bank, a slight shock through the boat, an 'Easy all' from Wingfield, and all was over. We had made our bump, and were happy. I would not have exchanged places that minute with any man you like to name. Never before, and never since, have I felt anything like the calm, triumphant happiness of rowing back to our barge with Oriel behind us, and the cheers of half the river ringing in our ears. And then what heroes we were as we stepped out of the boat! The cheering, the patting on the back, the almost hugging that we got! Oh, it was worth millions! 'Stroke, my lad,' said Hallett, 'you rowed like a man.' 'Like three men, you mean,' put in Baxter, who was greatly excited. 'It was a grand race; your spurt at the top willow was simply splendid. Come along, old boy, you must be awfully pumped; come and sit down; you're the pluckiest little brick I know.'

That night, when dinner was over, a crowd gathered on the hall steps, and Hallett, with a huge silver cup in his hand, that one which reminded us of our triumphs at Henley, came out, and drank 'To the health of the gallant Torpid;' and then such cheers rang out as it would have been worth your while to hear. And so the first day of the races came to an end. That was the great day for us: we bumped two more boats, but neither of them gave us such a race as the one I have described, and we ended second on the river.

'By Jove,' said Tip, triumphantly, as we walked up to College after the last race, 'we haven't been so high on the river for five years; won't we have a rattling bump-supper, and no mistake!'

MODERN BEAU BRUMMELLISM.

BEAU BRUMMELL was the dandy of his day, and a dandy of a peculiar kind. Etymologists tell us that the word 'dandy' is derived from the French *dandin*, or 'ninny,' or from the Italian *dandolo*, or 'toy.' Hence a dandy means one who dresses himself like a doll, a fop, a coxcomb, a ninny. The peculiar type which was especially represented by the famous Brummell was combined with an amount of fastidiousness and helplessness to which there is no parallel. He was a remarkable instance of a man pushing himself into a grade of society to which he had no claim, by dint of a certain amount of assurance and a high estimation of himself. There is nothing more true than the saying that the world takes a man at the value he sets upon himself. He who depreciates himself by a humility, whether true or false, will not be esteemed by the world at large. The dealer who cries 'stinking fish' is not likely to find much custom for his wares. Let a man assert himself, and lay claim to a certain amount of wisdom, and talk like an oracle, and the chances are that, unless he is a fool, the world, having neither time nor inclination to go into the matter, will take him at his own valuation. It only requires perseverance, an indomitable will, and inordinate self-esteem, combined with a certain amount of tact, which, in this instance, might almost be better called an instinct of self-preservation, which prevents a man from showing the cards which he holds in his own hands. Some people are easily imposed upon by silence, and are apt to attribute depth of learning and profundity of thought to the man who is silent, for no other reason than that he has nothing to say. Coleridge says, 'Silence does not always mark wisdom;' and goes on to relate an anecdote in illustration. 'I was at dinner, some time ago, in company with a man who listened to me and said nothing for a long time; but he nodded his head, and I thought him intelligent. At length, towards the end of dinner, some apple dump-

lings were placed on the table, and my man had no sooner seen them than he burst forth with "Them's the jockeys for me!" He destroyed whatever *prestige* he had acquired by his silence by showing his folly.' Had he remained silent, Coleridge might have continued to think him intelligent. The man who is wise enough to keep his own counsel while he lays claim to superior gifts, will probably get credit for all he claims. In Brummell we have a remarkable instance of a man valued according to his own estimate of himself. Possessing no great mental gifts, he worked his way into the highest ranks of society, until he came into the very presence of royalty, where he made himself necessary by the force of will, assurance, and self-conceit, which had already obtained for him so great a reputation, that to be spoken to by Brummell, and to dress like him, was the ambition of all the dandies of the day. No doubt he possessed great graces of the body, as well as the natural gift of an almost faultless taste: otherwise it would be impossible fully to account for the completeness of his success while he basked in the sunshine of royal favour. He was the very type of dandies,

'neat, trimly dress'd,
Fresh as a bridegroom . . .

He was perfumed like a milliner,
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose, and took 't away again.'

Stories without end are told of him, all pointing to him as the great oracle in dress. No lady ever required the attention of her handmaid more than Brummell demanded the assistance of his valet during the tedious operation of his toilet. The great secret of tying a cravat was known only to Brummell and his set; and it is reported of him that his servant was seen to leave his presence with a large quantity of tumbled cravats, which, on being interrogated, he said were 'failures,' so important were cravats in those days, and so critical the tying of

them. His fastidiousness and helplessness are exhibited side by side in this anecdote. The one that there should have been so many 'failures' before he could be satisfied; the other, that he should have required the assistance of a valet, or, indeed, of any hand except his own in tying it.

This fastidiousness and helplessness are not, however, confined to any age. Indolence, conceit, love of dress, and helplessness, will always exist so long as we have bodies to pamper and to deck. There will always be men who devote much time and thought to their personal appearance, who 'shine so brisk, and smell so sweet, and talk so like a waiting gentlewoman;' men who try on coat after coat, and waistcoat after waistcoat, that their effect may be faultless; who consider harmony of colour, and the cut of a coat, or the fit of a shoe or a boot, matters of the greatest moment in life; who, whether beardless boys or elderly men, never pass a looking-glass without stealing sly glances at themselves, and never move except with care and caution, lest the arrangement of their hair, or some portion of their toilet, should be marred. The elderly dandies study to be *bien conservés*, while the younger ones care only never to be behind the fashion of the day, be it what it may. In a certain listlessness of manner they, like Brummell, demand the constant attention of a valet. They require him to stand behind them and arrange the parting of their hair at the back of the head and to smoothe it, to make the collar and tie lie well, to tighten the waistcoat, and put on the coat artistically, and press out any creases, to put the right quantity of perfume on the handkerchief, and, in fine, to be responsible for their appearance. These dandies cannot lace or unlace their own boots; they cannot take off their own coat; and never for a moment dream of packing their own clothes, or of looking after their own luggage when they travel. They look for, expect, and demand an amount of attention which any, who do not happen to be somewhat behind the scenes, would suppose

none but the most helpless of women would require. It by no means follows that they have been brought up in such Sybarite habits. Love of ease, love of self-importance, or a mistaken idea that it indicates high breeding, have led to this unmanliness. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that they who have been most accustomed to what are called the luxuries of life from their very cradle are the most dependent upon them. Perhaps some of the most independent men are to be found among those who have all their lives been in the full enjoyment of every comfort, while, on the other hand, they who have come into possession of them only recently, and by a lucky stroke of fortune, lay the most stress upon them, and are very tenacious of them, as if the secret of true happiness were bound up in them. Nothing illustrates this more than the noble and manly way in which some of those who had been brought up in the very lap of luxury bore the hardships and adversities of a soldier's life during the war in the Crimea. Then it was that the true metal showed itself; that good blood proved itself by noble deeds.

It cannot be denied that it would be difficult to devise anything more hideous or unbecoming than the dress of a gentleman of the nineteenth century. It may be easy and comfortable, and a wider margin may be allowed to the caprice of individuals; but, in all its forms, it is ugly and deficient in both picturesque and pictorial effect. One of the great charms of Vandyke's pictures, apart, of course, from their exquisite painting, lies in the dress. They are all such courtly gentlemen, and one feels to be in such good company as one admires them. Theirs was no fancy dress put on for the occasion, no special dandyism, but the ordinary dress of the times, such as men of their rank and position were accustomed to wear. There was much more etiquette in dress formerly than now exists, just as there was much more formality in all they did. Ruffles and buckles, silk hose and doublets, were not adopted specially by any one more

devoted than his neighbours to the love and science of dress. Men and women were more courteous to one another, outwardly at least, than they now are. Children rose up at the entrance of their parents, and did not resume their seats while they were standing. No man would address any lady in public with his head covered. Young men would take off their hats even to their equals, always to their elders. The old *minuet de la cour* was a very sedate kind of dance compared with those of the present day. If we have gained in freedom, we have lost a great deal of outward mutual respect. Much of what we mean still remains on the Continent, where there is a considerable distinction between the various classes in matters of dress. The peasant has his or her style, and the nobles theirs, while the intermediate classes have their distinctive styles. These distinctions are now abolished. We have no national costume; and the lowest menials endeavour to imitate, to the best of their powers, the grandest lords and ladies in the land.

It would be a great mistake to infer, from the pictures which have been handed down to us, that there was more dandyism formerly than now. Who would lay anything of the kind to the charge of Lord Nelson? Yet we find him represented to us, in paintings descriptive of his great naval actions, dressed in knee-breeches, silk stockings, and all the accessories of a court dress.

It was the custom which prevailed at that period, and is by no means a fashion in the sense in which the word is used to denote super-excellence and super-fastidiousness in dress. At the death of Lord Nelson the officers who surrounded that great hero are depicted dressed according to the custom which was as much *de rigueur* as it is now for officers in the army and navy to put on their uniforms when they go into the presence of royalty. To compare small things with great, we find that Lord Winchilsea's Eleven played at cricket in silver-laced hats, knee-breeches, and silk stock-

ings. Bumps and even blood would occasionally show and come through the stockings; and it is related of one man that he tore a finger-nail off against his shoe-buckle in picking up a ball! There must have been a very different kind of bowling then to that which now prevails, if we may judge from the necessity for pads of all kinds and descriptions, and when, in spite of pads and gloves, fingers and, occasionally, even legs are broken by the excessive violence of the bowling.

The formality and courtliness in dress which existed even to so late a period as that to which we have referred, may be said to have gone out with hoops and powder. Our ancestors, no doubt, deplored the changes which took place in their days, and sighed over the introduction of novelties, and the freedom or license, as it may be called, in dress in our times would have shocked their sense of propriety, for we find an amusing account in the 'Spectator' of the alarm felt at the way in which ladies dressed themselves for riding, 'in a hat and feather, a riding-coat and perwig, or at least tying up their hair in a bag or riband, in imitation of the smart part of the opposite sex,' which the astonished countryman described as 'a gentleman in a coat and hat.'

There can be no doubt that a certain amount of attention to dress is necessary so far as it effects personal cleanliness and neatness. A well-dressed man, that is to say, a man who dresses like a gentleman, neither like a fop, nor a clerk, nor a tailor who makes his own back his advertisement, is sure to be well received in all good society. Goldsmith says that 'Processions, cavalcades, and all that fund of gay frippery furnished out by tailors, barbers, and firewomen, mechanically influence the mind into veneration; an emperor in his nightcap would not meet with half the respect of an emperor with a crown.' The only complaint made against our gracious Queen, when she visited Ireland, by some of her poor Irish subjects was, that 'she was dressed like any other lady, and

had no crown on her head.' There is much worldly wisdom in paying some heed to the adornment of the outer man. It is a good letter of introduction; but when it goes beyond that, and branches out into excesses of foppery, it becomes unmanly, and, as such, cannot be too much condemned. When young men are either so helpless or fastidious that the constant presence of a valet during their toilet is a *sine quâ non*; that the parting at the back of the head requires as much attention as a lady's 'back hair'; it is time, indeed, that some such satirist as the old 'Spectator' should rise up and turn them into ridicule.

But of all the fops in existence, the old fop is the most contemptible. A man who has outlived his generation; who trips like Agag 'delicately,' to hide the infirmities of age, or affect a youth that has long ceased; who competes with the young men of the day in his attentions to the fair sex; who dresses in the very extreme of the prevailing fashion of the day, with shirts elaborately embroidered, and wristbands, fastened together with conspicuously magnificent sleeve-links, which he is always pulling down, either to show them or to establish the fact, which no one would care to dispute, that he has a clean shirt to his back; who is scented and perfumed; whose wig, faultlessly made, is judiciously sprinkled with a few grey hairs that it may appear to be his own hair when he has long ceased to have any to boast of; who uses dyes and cosmetics that the marks of age may be obliterated and the bloom of youth imitated; who is in a flutter of delight when any one conversant with his weakness is kind enough to mistake him for his own son or the husband of one of his daughters; such a man is an object of both pity and contempt. When age is not accompanied by wisdom, but exhibits only the folly of which man's weakness is capable, it is a hopeless case.

Dirty fops are an especial abomination. Men, young or old, who are at great pains to adorn them-

selves without the most scrupulous regard to cleanliness; who wear many rings upon very indifferently washed fingers; who hang themselves in chains of gold; whose shirt fronts present the greatest variety, at different times, of the most costly jewellery; whose discoloured teeth and ill-brushed hair are a revelation in themselves,—such men only make their defect the more conspicuous by the decorations with which they overlay it. It is related of a *grande dame* who was remarkable for her wit and beauty, that she rejected a man of considerable note in the world, as well as an 'exquisite,' of his day, and who was one of her most devoted admirers, for no other reason than that she saw ensconced between his teeth, when he made his appearance at breakfast, a piece of spinach which she had noticed the evening before. It is impossible for any one, whether man, woman, or child, to be too particular about cleanliness of person and of habits. In these days, when there are such facilities for washing, and when all appliances are so easy of attainment, it is perfectly inexcusable in any one to fail in cleanliness; and of all people, the fop, who professes to make his person his study, is the most inexcusable if he neglect the fundamental principle of dandyism, which is, in fact, its chief, if not its only recommendation.

It has been said that the youth who is not more or less a dandy, will grow into an untidy, slovenly man. There may be some truth in this. Indeed, we should be sorry to see any young man altogether indifferent about his personal appearance. It is not that which offends. It is rather the excess to which it is carried; when self becomes the all-absorbing subject upon which thought, time, and labour are spent; when it degenerates into foppery, into an effeminacy, into a certain listlessness, helplessness, and affectation which are unworthy of a man. It is finicalness of dandyism, and not its neatness and cleanliness, that we quarrel with, on the principle that whatever detracts from manliness is unworthy of a man.

THE SOCIETY OF FEMALE ARTISTS.

THE art of reviewing works of human skill and industry with the least possible amount of trouble to the critic would make a curious treatise, and perhaps add a new chapter to the 'Curiosities of Literature.' To cut up a book without cutting its pages; to notice a new play without seeing it; to criticise an opera without a knowledge of thorough bass, or even, perhaps, of music, would, no doubt, be excellent practice for the imagination and the display of ingenuity, but by no means conducive to the purity of those laws which are supposed to govern the republic of letters, though the system has been tried before now; and if this short article were an essay upon criticism instead of a brief criticism upon the pictorial essays of female artists, we might be able to give our readers more than one illustration of the—shall we say—'gay science' of *re-viewing* without viewing at all! Indeed, the experiment of importing the semblance of truth to mere guess-work has its temptations; and at this moment it were quite possible to write a criticism, more or less elaborate, upon the pictures exhibited by the Society of Female Artists without seeing them, in which case it may interest the sceptic to know how such a piece of literary prestidigitation could be accomplished, and nothing more easy when the art is once known. We should commence by a general onslaught on all such minor institutions as that under notice, terming them, in comparison with the great Conservatory Exhibitions of London, the little forcing-frames of the nursery grounds which encourage the precocious sea-kale, or protect the delicate seedling. Then, guided by the catalogue borrowed of some friend, we should select those works for especial praise against which are affixed the highest prices; and after lauding Rosa Bonheur's sketch of 'Doe and Fawns in the Forest of Fontainebleau' as a very safe critical venture, we should go on, trusting to a delicate instinct for feeling in

the dark, to sneer at, condemn, and depreciate all the less pretentious works, interlarding our remarks with certain technical phrases which would at once prove us as speaking *ex cathedra*, but at the same time, careful lest we should seem to forget the dictum that 'art is difficult—criticism easy,' we should ascertain what pictures had been *sold*, and armed with this valuable knowledge, we should sing 'Iō Poems' in their praises without stint or limit.

Thus, with only a slight knowledge of the critic's legerdemain, we could write a capital notice; and who would possibly surmise it was inspired and 'thrown off' in the coffee-room of an hotel fifty miles from the great brick-and-mortar and stucco Polyplus called London?

All this knowledge, however, of playing the game of speculation, or of a sort of literary blind man's buff, is useless in our especial case, owing to the fact that we regard the Society of Female Artists with sentiments of respect, and from the belief that it is worthy of honest encouragement; more especially when we consider the exclusiveness of the two water-colour societies, who decline to have any more female members, and the slender chances of artists' unknown works finding admittance to the Royal Academy. The Society dates from about 1857, and for the first six years was managed by lady patronesses, but failed for want of healthy organization. On the committee of ladies retiring from the direction, the artists appointed an excellent secretary, and exerted themselves to procure a good gallery, which, thanks to the liberal treatment of the Institute of Architects, they have obtained; they also instituted a class for studying from living models, and raised sufficient funds to make a fresh start. All this is most praiseworthy; and it now only rests with the artists themselves to render, by the nature of the works they exhibit every succeeding year, a fresh record of exertions and of success.

In respect to the works at present

on the walls of the Exhibition, if we take a quiet stroll round the room, beginning at the lowest number, and proceeding leisurely on, we may be able, perhaps, to arrive at a fair conclusion as to their merits in detail, as well as some idea of the Exhibition as a whole.

The first picture that we pause at, No. 28, by Miss C. James, is a very unambitious one, but withal deserves especial remark. It is called 'The Last of the Season,' and consists of a bouquet of chrysanthemums so daintily painted, that we hope its title will, for many a long year to come, only apply to the subject the artist selects, and not to her works. 'The Minster, from Bootham Bar, York' (No. 29), by Miss L. Rayner, is very nearly the best picture in the collection, if not the best of its kind. The light at the end of the street, the perspective, the foreground, and evident painstaking in the entire composition, will well repay a thorough examination. 'Magnolias,' by Miss Lane (No. 41), is very clever; and though, as a rule, flowers are not considered marketable, we confess to an especial pleasure in the portrait-taking of these lovely creations. Sauntering on, we come to No. 43, 'Gorge of Pfeiffers, near Ragatz, in Switzerland,' by Mrs. Marrable, who contributes no less than fifteen pictures to the Exhibition! There is a boldness and decision about the works of this lady very remarkable in an amateur, and she has the good sense and artistic feeling to escape conventionalities, and copy direct from Nature. There is nothing so offensive to true art, nothing so fatal to genius, as the indulgences of *prettinesses* of all sorts; while the boldness to seek Nature, and courage to limn her in all her moods, without fear and without ceremony, is one of the rarest gifts. The rough crag and brawling torrent become too often the smooth cliff and purling stream, just as, in portrait painting, the masterly sketch and vigorous outline is rendered, with a smile of complacency, as the tea-board picture, all finished and decorous. A determination to paint scenery as it is, with no attempt to sublimate it with pretty trickeries,

is especially apparent in the more ambitious of Mrs. Marrable's productions, which we consider a far better augury for her future artistic career than the possession of talents more striking and clap-trappish. The faults most perceptible in the works of this lady are the absence of a delicacy of tints required for distance, the lack of aerial perspective, and a general want of transparency in her colouring where transparency is needed; and also, we should say, a neglect of the minor details of her pictures, which your true artist is as jealous of as the rest of the work. But these are secondary or mechanical faults, which thought, labour, and a love of her art—which latter she evidently possesses—will overcome. 'The Study of a Head' (No. 54), by M^{me}. Henriette Brown; 'Streatly Church, from the Thames' (No. 59), by Miss Warren; 'The Knitting Lesson' (No. 81), by Adelaide Burgess; are all deserving of especial notice; while 'Arlington Church, Sussex' (No. 90), by Miss M. Rayner, and 'Monks in Canterbury Crypt' (No. 107), by Miss Louisa Rayner—especially the last for power, colour, and finish—require that they should be thoroughly examined for their proper appreciation. 'Rhododendrons and Azalias' (No. 146), by Florence Peel, must not be passed by; neither must 'Tria de Trabajo' (No. 148), by Agnes Bouvier. The latter, while exhibiting undoubted care in its manipulations, is stiff, and too near an approach to miniature painting. 'Autumn on the Thames, near Mapledurham' (No. 151), by Miss S. S. Warren, for its quiet beauty, harmony of colouring, and sober, tranquil character—all feeling, and no display—is, in our opinion, the gem of the Exhibition, and exhibits one of the rarest qualities in paintings of all descriptions—contentment with the use of a few colours. The great painters were satisfied with a very limited stock of pigments; and in the same way that the giant musicians of the past composed their *chefs-d'œuvre* by the aid of a scale so limited that our bravura singers would shake in their throats to think of it, so, many of the world-famous painters of old employed as

limited a chromatic scale in *their* especial art; but then they knew the exact effect of each pigment, whereas our modern artists are perpetually making compromises in colour, and instead of a good honest red, blue, green, or yellow, will dilute and confuse them into so-called neutral tints, which may, or may not, have existence in Nature. Precision in the use of colour is as needful in painting as precision in the touch of a note in music: in either case indecision is a sure symptom of weakness and want of skill.

'The Brook Side' (No. 190), by Miss Williams; 'Portrait of a Young Lady' (No. 195), by Mrs. Bridell; 'Gloxiana' (No. 200), by Miss Baker; 'In Perthshire' (No. 219)—very charming—by Mrs. J. W. Brown; 'Great Expectations' (No. 225)—the faces admirable—by Miss Emma Brownlow; 'Jehu' (No. 235)—which, if not a copy from, has a promising relish of, the antique—by Miss Jekyll; 'Arab Boy Dancing to his Companions' (No. 238), by Mrs. F. Lee Bridell, are all pictures worthy to arrest the attention; and then we come to 'The Courtship of Sir Charles Grandison' (No. 259), by Miss Claxton, which, in many respects, is so excellent, especially the finish and expression of the faces of the beau and belle, that it is a pity this lady should copy in her drapery and *pose* of the figures the caricatures of Gilray. Let her trust to her own talents and inspiration, and not to the bizarre creations of a bygone school. Next, a word of commendation is justly earned by Miss Warren (No. 279), for her picture of the 'Thames at Isleworth'; and so also are the following deserving of special notice, though, of course, in the limited space assigned to a critique in the pages of a monthly periodical, it is impossible to enter into the details of the subject:—they are, 'Pæony, etc.' (No. 281), by Miss Charlotte James; 'A Quiet Nook on the Thames' (No. 282), by Miss S. S. Warren; 'Piper and Feathers' (No. 299), by J. D.; 'Study of a Negress' (No. 339), by Mrs. F. Lee Bridell; and 'Counting the Stitches' (No. 348), by Ellen Partridge.

If artists—men and women—will only learn to courageously view even their shortcomings as stepping-stones to better achievements, much may be expected from the art workshops of the world; and we would wager the humble and patient against those with more striking, nay, with more brilliant, attributes (supposing each is commencing a career), if to the former is given a power to self-criticise, and judgment to tell them what they should leave unattempted. This latter knowledge would have prevented Miss Emma Cooper (No. 268) introducing a snail into her picture, or, at all events, such a snail! Delicate elaboration, and lavish expenditure of time and patience, are the first requisites for depicting 'still life,' as so wonderfully illustrated by the minor accessories in the great Dutch masters, such as the flies, spiders, snails, butterflies, and drops of water of Van Os, Van Huysum, Rachael Ruysch, Casteel, and even our own countryman Luke Cradock. Upon the same principle permit us to ask Miss E. Brownlow (No. 212) why, if she paints toy ducks (in the foreground, too!), she does not also favour us with the little loadstone rod to attract them, and dish or basin to swim in? Then again, self-criticism would have prevented Miss L. Swift (No. 187) painting satin with clay, not colour; and would have thrown a little air and distance into the backgrounds of Nos. 170, 197, and 200, by Mesdames Seymour, Bridell, and Baker, each work possessing merit, especially the latter.

As a whole, it is impossible to deny that the collection is a poor one, and that the majority of the works exhibited lack dignity, power, and imagination; while not a single production can be said to be inspired by genius. Possibly the only picture in the gallery which has any pretension at all to rank under this title is Miss Jekyll's 'Jehu,' but it is impossible to judge by a single specimen of this lady's talents, or to say if she illustrates Goethe's dictum, that 'there are many echoes, but few voices,' and whether the picture we allude to is a copy, a bit out of some

calling, perhaps, or the expression of her own thought.

But *nil desperandum* should be the Society's motto, for at least it boasts of a large amount of individual industry; and labour in every calling,

Carlyle has taught us in eloquence incontrovertible, is noble, and ennobling even in failure, for failures are often the pioneers to success, by warning us from the paths we ought not to take.

MR. FAIRWEATHER'S YACHTING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'YACHTING ROUND THE WEST OF ENGLAND.'

CHAPTER II.

MY FIRST YACHT.

ALTHOUGH my experience of yachting had been up to the present time so limited, many of my original ideas on the subject were already changed. Among other mistakes, one I had laboured under was with regard to the character of sailors. I had always looked upon the crew of a vessel as a company of generous, congenial spirits, whose faults mainly consisted of too great a contempt of danger and too strong a tendency to jollification. I could not have imagined that the petty cares and jealousies of shore could exist among the free waves and fresh breezes of the sea. Yet such I found was the case. Brown, the captain, was perpetually complaining to me about James, the crew, and he in turn revenged himself by making friends with Simpkins, the maid, and confiding his misgivings about the captain in a quarter where he knew they would be repeated with additions. James had been in the navy, Brown in the merchant marine, and they fought as though the destinies of the rival services depended upon their personal exertions. If James asserted that the British navy were the finest body of men in the world, and could do anything on sea or land, Brown maintained that they were the refuse of the population that nothing could be made of on shore, and still less at sea. If James said they had four good things in the navy, bread, chocolate, rum, and tobacco, Brown observed

that he did not care for any of them; give him the good roast beef. They also differed as to the proper cut of a pair of trousers, which, as sailors often have to make their own, occasioned a greater misunderstanding between them than might have been anticipated. As to the boy Harry, he was always in the wrong; both were agreed on that, and he enjoyed the reputation of a domestic cat, who is looked upon as the cause of every catastrophe and misadventure. Dickens has ably portrayed the miseries of quarrelling in a cart, but they were nothing in comparison with contending over a red-hot stove in a fore-castle where there was not even room to stand upright.

Another point on which I had been in error related to fishing. I had supposed that having a vessel provided with nets and lines, I should, in the course of my excursions, take a considerable quantity of fish, and had even given some of my friends reason to hope for an occasional present. But I found that fishing was a distinct occupation from yachting; it necessitated remaining almost stationary for hours and days, and in the most distant and inconvenient localities. It also destroyed the neat appearance of the deck and rails, and, in a word, occasioned so much outlay and loss of time that it would have been cheaper to buy flounders at half a guinea each than to catch them in our own net. We once or twice attempted line fishing, but

even in this there was generally too much or too little way on the vessel to render it successful.

The *Zephyrina* was not a smart-looking craft. She was undermasted, which always gives a dumpty appearance. In lamenting and consulting over this unfortunate circumstance with the captain, he suggested that it might be partly remedied by substituting a taller topmast; for to have altered the mainmast would have been to have renewed all the sails and rigging. So the captain obtained a very long 'stick,' and had a large new sail made for it, but it did not produce the anticipated effect; on the contrary, it attracted more attention to the lower mast and mainsail, and made it look still more insignificant and dingy.

This improvement was carried out shortly before we started on our next expedition; and my opinion as to its success was formed from the extremity of Southend pier while awaiting the boat which was to convey me on board. The large top-sail, however, had a decidedly beneficial effect upon our speed, for we soon passed the Nore lightship, and were passing Sheppey in the direction of Margate. The north coast of this island was loftier and more picturesque than I had imagined, and even reminded me of some parts of North Devon. It was moulded into grassy terraces and slopes, and in some places luxuriant trees crowned the heights or descended the ravines to the water's edge. Sheppey was once held in higher estimation than it is at present when good Queen Sexburga founded a nunnery upon it in 670—some portions of which still remain—and, indeed, all these coasts of Kent would be considered highly interesting from their Saxon associations had they not become too familiar to us, owing to their vicinity to the metropolis.

The wind had changed before we could reach Margate, and we were obliged to put about and make for Sheerness and Rochester. The coast shelves away very gradually along the Isle of Grain, and we had consequently—for the wind was fresh

—to encounter a considerable amount of 'lumpy' water. We passed a very strange-looking cutter on our way, a pay boat 150 years old; but as we approached Sheerness we could have imagined that we had obtained the golden branch of the Sibyl, and were sailing across the Styx into the shadowy realms below. On either hand rose the monarchs of the seas of bygone ages—mighty warriors silent and motionless, lying grimly side by side, as in funereal state. All were peaceful now as the gallant hearts who once bore them to victory. Here may they rest in honour, and inspire future generations to emulate the glories of the past!

We anchored under the old castle of Rochester; and, although the Norman conqueror had left here the most conspicuous mark of his dominion, we found interesting traces of the Saxon in the very name of the city, which is derived from the camp of Hrof. King Ethelbert also built, in 597, a Christian church here, founded a monastery for secular priests, and established a bishop's see. We spent the night at an hotel kept by a lieutenant in the navy, an ancient boneso commanding a fine view of the castle and cathedral, and as the wind was still unfavourable, determined next morning upon rowing up the Medway, for which we had a fine day and a fair breeze. James and myself were the oarsmen on this occasion, and as the boat was light we soon passed the lower part of the river, which is disfigured with storehouses and cement works, and entered a smiling country where luxuriant trees and well-kept lawns bespoke the presence of wealth and taste. After passing under the picturesque old bridge of Aylesford, near which Vortigern and Hengist are supposed to have fought their first great battle, the scenery of the 'smooth Medway' became more beautiful. The banks were ennobled with magnificent trees, varied here and there by some ivymantled remnant of the past, or by some ornamental villa, whose bright parterres extended to the water's edge, and crimsoned the

silver flood. We disembarked at Allington Castle, which stands in a solitary position on the left side of the river. Making our way through the tall loosestrife which fringed the water with its purple flowers, we gained the precincts of the ruin. It is of considerable extent, and in fair preservation. Nature has cherished what man has abandoned, has spread her leafy arms around it, and embosomed its crumbling walls in the emblem of immortality. On the south a large tower rears its shattered crest, and is supposed to have formed part of the earlier building. Allington derived its name from the Saxon *Ælinges*, and was granted by the Conqueror to William de Warrenne. It then passed through a family of the same name as the place to Sir Stephen de Penchester, who obtained license in the reign of Henry III. to fortify and embattle his castle here. But it derives its principal celebrity from the Wyatts, into whose possession it first came in the reign of Henry VII. The son of Sir Henry, the first possessor, became a remarkable man from his great talents and personal attractions. He is mentioned by Surrey as a model of virtue, wisdom, beauty, strength, and courage. He seems to have spent much of his time at this castle, which, as we may see by the remains of Tudor architecture, he greatly enlarged and embellished. In one of his poems he thus refers to his life here—

'This maketh me at home to hunt and hawk,
And in foul weather at my book to sit,
In frost and snow then with my bow to stalk,
No man doth mark whereso I bide or go,
In lusty leas in liberty I walk,
And of these news I feel nor weal nor woe.'

There were some whisperings that he had formed an attachment with Anne Boleyn, but they were probably merely the suggestions of envy, as he was a great favourite with Henry VIII. His son, unfortunately for himself, did not inherit his father's peaceful and philosophic temperament. Sir Thomas was a man of enterprise, and took a warm interest in the religious and political movements of the day. His party were highly incensed at the conduct of Queen Mary, and on hearing of

the proposed alliance with Philip of Spain, he, while others were mostly hesitating and concealing their disaffection, openly raised the standard of revolt. He was supported by the greater part of Kent, and at first met with so much success, that he advanced upon London and demanded of the Queen to give up the Spanish marriage and put the Tower into his hands. But the royal party in the city were by this time in arms; Sir Thomas Wyatt's followers began to desert; and he was finally defeated and made prisoner near Temple Bar. He behaved himself nobly in his misfortunes; and it was owing to his protesting to the last on the scaffold the innocence of the Princess Elizabeth that she was released from imprisonment. He was beheaded at the Tower, and his head, after it had been cut off, was, in accordance with the barbarity of the times, exhibited on a gallows on Hay Hill. The people in the neighbourhood of Allington account for the present desolation of the place by asserting that all the inhabitants followed Sir Thomas Wyatt to London, and never afterwards returned.

We reached town by the evening train, having left directions with the captain to proceed with the yacht to Ramsgate. Our excursions had not, up to the present time, been very considerable; but we determined to crown the season by a voyage to the coast of France. A fine autumnal morning, about a fortnight afterwards, saw us whirling over the rails through the garden of Kent, and admiring the busy, picturesque scene presented on all sides by the hop-gatherers at work. We reached Ramsgate at one, and hoped to have been under way immediately; but no such good fortune awaited us. We found the *Zephyrina* lying at the highest part of the dock, and as the tide was not high she was not afloat; and even had she been we were informed that she could not have left as the dock-gates were not open. They said that in the course of half an hour these difficulties would be removed. Vain hope! Scarcely anything was prepared. The vessel, having no papers, had

to be measured before leaving, to fix the amount of the harbour dues, and the official upon whom this duty devolved was away upon some other business. After a long delay he arrived with his chains and satisfied himself as to her burden, enabling us to calculate the amount due, at the rate of sixpence a ton. But all was not yet over; the money was not to be paid in that off-hand manner and the affair settled. We must wait upon the harbour-master, who was for the moment engaged, then call at the custom-house, then return to the harbour-master, and then mount again up two flights of stairs to the custom-house. I was tired out and almost in despair before we started, which was not until four o'clock. The day was now somewhat far advanced and began to look a little unsettled to the west, but as there was a favourable N.W. breeze we determined to proceed. A slight squall came on just as we emerged from the harbour, which a little discomposed my wife, but it soon passed, and by the time we were half across Pegwell Bay the weather was as fine as could have been desired. This bay, which for many of us possesses so little of interest, and is now becoming gradually filled up with sand, has witnessed some of the most remarkable scenes in the English history. Hengist and Horsa, with their fierce, rude followers, were borne across its waves to Ebbsfleet, which once stood on its shore, and at the same place landed St. Augustine and his monks, and formed a procession to meet King Ethelbert, bearing before them a picture of a crucified Saviour and singing Gregorian chants.

For some time the white cliffs of Ramsgate and the North Foreland, lit up by the sun's rays, formed beautiful objects in our wake, but by degrees we began to lose them, and to distinguish Deal more clearly lying along the lowland on the farther side of the bay. Sandown Castle—a massive tower rising grandly from the water's edge, at the nearer extremity of the town—was, from this point, the principal feature in the view. This fine old pile will be a great loss to Deal,

for I hear it is in course of demolition for the purpose of constructing a harbour. The water in which we anchored, and which extends for some miles, was remarkably calm, and is commonly known as the 'Downs,' a term derived from the Saxon 'dunes,' and applied to this channel as being sheltered by hills or shoals of sand. These—the Goodwins—extend north and south for about ten miles parallel with the coast, and are supposed once to have formed an island, 'Lomia,' belonging to Earl Godwin, and to have been overwhelmed about the year 1100.

It was seven when we landed at Deal. We were much pleased with the picturesque irregularity of the town, and the brightness of the fine pebbly beach, although the length and steepness of the ridge rendered it difficult for some of our party to scramble to its summit. But we accomplished the feat, and our baggage was distributed among a tribe of little boys, who followed us in a long train to the hotel with unconcealed wonderment and admiration.

The evening had been broken by clouds and had a wild appearance. As we had sailed along we had marked the warning 'drums' hoisted along the coast, but the seamen paid little attention to them. Towards night the sky cleared, and the view from our windows over the placid sea, studded with the lights of innumerable ships at anchor, as far as the Goodwins' revolving light, was peaceful and beautiful. The distant horizon was occasionally lighted up by a flash of lightning, but this seemed to occasion no uneasiness, and ladies and gentlemen were parading up and down on the esplanade until past ten o'clock.

Next morning we rose at seven. The weather was lovely; and I went out in the highest spirits to consult the captain about leaving. He was on board, not expecting me so early, so that I was obliged to hire a boat.

'Fine morning,' I observed, addressing one of the seamen on the shore. 'How is the wind for France?'

'Fair, sir—west by north.'
 'I want a boat to be put over to that vessel. Have you one?'
 'Yes, sir. Which vessel?'
 'The cutter close to us.'
 'All right, sir. This way if you please.'
 'How much will it be?' I inquired; having paid half-a-crown for coming ashore.
 'A sovereign, sir.'
 'A sovereign?' I repeated, in astonishment.
 'Yes, sir.'
 I turned away in disgust. He observed my movement.
 'Well, sir, I'll do it for ten shillings.'

The man tried to follow me about, demanding, 'Didn't I want a boat?' but I soon quickened my pace, and left the impostor to his own conscience. I hear that half-a-sovereign is not an unusual amount for Thames watermen to charge foreigners for landing them on their arrival in England.

We weighed anchor at ten, and steered in the direction of the South Sand light, threading our way through the innumerable vessels which lay around. The Downs is a favourite roadstead, being [protected on nearly every point of the compass, but the reason it is generally so crowded is that in this part the tide runs nine hours up the Channel and only three down, so that vessels outward bound prefer waiting here for a change should the wind be contrary. All nations seemed to be here collected together—Norwegians, Dutch, Americans, and others, and yet all were easily distinguishable from one another by the different build of their ships. Our attention was attracted by a considerable number of French fishing-boats lying at anchor. They were three-masted luggers, and not cutters or 'smacks' such as are used in England. They are more weatherly boats than ours, and sail closer to the wind, but require more hands to manage them. We observed that almost every one bore on its stern the name and effigy of some tutelary saint. Southern seamen have always recognized their dependence upon a higher power even before St. Paul

set sail from Alexandria in a ship whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

The wind freshened as we advanced, and passing Walmer, half concealed by its luxuriant foliage, we opened Dover Castle, and the long line of the white cliffs whence Albion derives its name. We were now making good way, but as the breeze blew more and more free, the sea began to rise into white crests, and to treat us and our little bark in a most undignified and disagreeable manner. It appeared as though old Neptune were ridiculing our pretensions, and had resolved to show his power and make us repent of our temerity.

As we were thus progressing, 'carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep,' we heartily congratulated ourselves when we found that we were approaching the entrance of Calais harbour; for although the sea was higher than ever, we began to look forward to a termination of our airy career. Our dismay was proportionably great when, within about a quarter of a mile from the shore, and in the very worst of the 'lop,' the captain unceremoniously brought the vessel 'up,' and informed us that, as he was unacquainted with the port, it would be desirable to wait there for a pilot. Nothing resembling a pilot-boat was to be seen, and we were beginning to give ourselves up to despair, when, most opportunely, a three-masted French lugger came in sight, and Brown, who was a man of resources, determined upon following in her wake, adopting the bright idea of the Irish navigator, who sailed in this way to 'Bingal,' instead of to 'Fingal.' In our case the plan succeeded admirably; we rounded the pier safely, and sailed into smooth water. Just as we were clear of our difficulties, an unwieldy old boat, with two men in it, pulled alongside, and before we could ask any questions, one of them sprang like a cat over our bulwarks upon the deck, and commenced a wild unintelligible harangue, accompanied with violent gesticulations. I at first supposed that he was come with some authority, or was warning us against some

unseen danger; but his manner seemed quite opposed to such an idea, and, indeed, he did not appear to have any definite object in view. 'What does he want?' I exclaimed, thoroughly mystified and somewhat alarmed.

'Well, sir,' replied Brown, whose natural shrewdness compensated for his want of book knowledge. 'Well, sir, I think he wants—to be employed; and perhaps we had better take him, as, although he cannot do us much good, he may otherwise do us some harm.'

'Much good' he certainly did not do, for we did not understand anything he said. Brown had been in so many countries, and had learned so many languages, that he could not remember one of them, and the only word which he and the pilot seemed to have in common was 'provo,' which was occasionally exchanged with mysterious signs and looks, as if it had some deep signification. On one point, however, the intruder made himself thoroughly understood, and that was, that five francs were not sufficient for his services, but that he must have six.

Scarcely had we settled ourselves in the saloon, and were exploring the recesses of our Yorkshire pie, when a new commotion was heard on deck, and the captain came down to inform us that the custom-house officers had arrived. Six stalwart seamen, in the government uniform, presented a somewhat formidable appearance; but their manner was not so alarming as their aspect, for they merely asked if the yacht belonged to any 'société,' and whether I had any papers. Having been answered in the negative, they made some irrelevant observations, but did not prepare to make any examination, nor to return to their boat. Such was the state of matters, when it occurred to me that our mutual embarrassment might be removed by a timely libation. My conjecture proved correct, for on proposing that they should come below and try the quality of our sherry, they took off their hats, and accepted the invitation with great alacrity. What-

ever may be said to the contrary, the French are naturally a good-natured people. They seemed to approve of the wine, for they filled up again without much pressing, and repeated, with genial smiles as they drained their glasses, 'Anglais, vary goot.' When the bottle was finished, they withdrew with polite bows, and re-embarked in their boat, leaving with us a very favourable impression of French custom-house officers.

As we intended to stay several days in Calais, we determined upon removing to a hotel, for, not to mention minor inconveniences on board, there were several leaks in the deck; one, especially, just over my berth of so insidious a nature that no ingenuity could detect its origin. I had some faint recollection, even at such a distance of time, of Quillac's hotel, as of a large gloomy building in which the one or two visitors might be discovered in vain endeavouring to find their rooms, but now I heard that this house existed no longer, or rather, that M. Dessin had taken it, his own having been converted into a museum. Quillac's establishment had probably died of atrophy, and Dessin's hotel had been very appropriately consecrated to the Muses, inasmuch as Scott had meditated within its walls, and Sterne had met with delightful misfortunes in its *remise*. Some porters were soon found to assist our men in carrying up our baggage, and we marched in an irregular procession to our destination.

With what an air of romance and mystery did the mode of our arrival invest the good city of Calais. One would have supposed that it had been one of the least known places in the habitable globe; and, indeed, the tall houses, the long windows, and the thin people had a certain charm of novelty for me, for I had not been in France since I was a boy in jackets. As a zealous student and disciple of the 'Times,' and having read therein that there was as much worth seeing in the British Isles as in any other part of the world, I had ever piously turned my autumnal footsteps in the direction of our own

salubrious watering places. But what surprised me most—and I should think a similar impression must be made upon all visiting a foreign land for the first time—was, that every person we met with, instead of speaking plain English like other people, insisted on talking some unintelligible jargon. The Greeks, who considered the Egyptian priestesses to be a kind of pigeons, would certainly have described this as a community of daws and magpies.

Next day we proceeded to take a general view of the town. The shops were, with very few exceptions, divided into two classes—one devoted to the sale of 'liquides,' the other to that of confectionery. Arethusa was quite wild with delight at the brilliancy of the latter—a child who had considered all sub-lunary happiness to culminate in the enjoyment of barley sugar or raspberry drops—felt almost bewildered among such transparent colours, such magical devices; and she doubted whether even Cinderella, in her glass slippers, had seen anything half so enchanting. We accordingly entered one of these establishments to purchase some of the tempting sweetmeats. Down the centre of it was a long table laid out with a row of jars of preserves, half eaten, and in one of them stood a large wooden spoon, with which customers were wont to go through the confections in order, before making their choice. The shopman requested me to proceed. I looked with some misgivings at the proffered spoon, but Arethusa seemed to have no such scruples, and went through the ordeal very creditably, though not, I regret to say, without ulterior consequences. She finally gave the preference to the 'omnibus' preserves, so named because formed of a mixture of all kinds of fruits. We purchased a few pounds of this, and some samphire, which, for pickling, ought to be in more demand than it is at present, although we should scarcely be warranted in risking our necks to obtain it, as people seem to have done in Shakspeare's time. A few doors farther on our attention was attracted by a curious little

tree growing in a pot, at the door of an image—or, to use plain English, an idol-monger's shop. The tree looked like a deformity, for it had a very large round head standing upon a very slender stem. Observing our attention, a sharp little woman came out and informed us that what we were examining was a mignonette tree, and requested us, at the same time, to step in and inspect her stock. As we did not seem inclined to comply, she assured us we need feel no hesitation, as she received large orders from Protestants in England, and had a very choice selection of saints.

But the principal object we had in view was to visit the church, whose massive tower, surmounted by a short steeple, is the first mark by which Calais is recognized from the sea. There was something in the quaint form of this grand old pile—something in the reflection that it was built by the English—that transported us, as we paced its spacious area, to ages long past; to a state of things far different from the present. But the more we endeavoured to fill up the picture, to grasp the pleasing vision, the more unsubstantial did it appear; for it is the halo of mystery with which the past is surrounded that 'lends enchantment to the view.' While we were thus vainly endeavouring to conjure up the scenes and evoke the heroes of bygone ages, we found ourselves opposite a large painting representing a warrior rising from the sea on his charger. As the costume did not bespeak a sea divinity, nor had I ever seen one so like a Frenchman, I felt considerably puzzled, and applied for information to an old pensioner who had been pursuing us all over the church, dispelling our illusions by his obtrusive loquacity. 'That, sir,' he replied, 'is the Duke de Guise, who wrested Calais from the English; and he is represented as rising from the water because Calais was then surrounded by the sea.' The fact was that the town was formerly surrounded by marshes, which rendered its defence easy, and was one reason why the English were able to hold it so long. There was

only one approach to it on the land side, and that, between the castles of St. Agatha and Newman Bridge, was protected by a fosse and strongly fortified. It was over-confidence in the natural strength of the place that led to its recovery by the French. After the battle of St. Quentin, Coligny suggested to the Duke de Guise that Calais might be successfully surprised in the winter, at which season the English left there a very small garrison. The fleet was accordingly ordered round, a furious attack made by sea and land, and after eight days the fosse was drained and the town carried by assault.

The puissant Balafré is very naturally a great favourite in Calais; a bust of him has been placed beside that of Richelieu in the Grand Place, and a Guildhall built for the mayor and aldermen of Edward III.—part of which, principally the gateway, still remains—is designated Hôtel de Guise, from his having afterwards occupied it. How much valour and ability was lost in this prince through insatiable and unscrupulous ambition! Had he, in those momentous transactions in which he exercised so great an influence, curbed his haughty and intolerant spirit, he would have escaped the dagger of the assassin and have left a name glorious not only in France but throughout Christendom.

Before returning to our hotel I paid a visit to our 'craft,' which was moored in the harbour near the railway-station. She presented a much neater appearance than when we had left her; the captain had done his best to make her look well; he had stowed away the sails, which were not very ornamental, and hung out the carpet, which was, and which had attracted an assembly of little boys who stood in a line along the quay in mute admiration. He had also hoisted the flag, though at a great sacrifice of personal feeling, for it was nothing more than a plain red whiff. If he had a weakness it was for a good set of colours, and he was constantly enumerating the advantages of belonging to a yacht club, evidently

thinking my not doing so to be a piece of culpable negligence. But the fact was that I was not sufficiently familiar with yachting affairs to decide whether it would be desirable for me to belong to a club; nor was I acquainted with any member of one to whom I would willingly apply. So Brown was obliged to continue in his astonishment, and to hoist the obnoxious and unprivileged whiff.

Our first excursion from Calais was to St. Omer—a distance of about five leagues. We arrived in the afternoon; the day was soft and autumnal, and a sweet sadness or listlessness seemed to pervade the place—a stillness suitable to magnificence in decay. On either side of the street rose those palatial buildings which, from their size, are in France designated 'hotels,' but in most of them there was as little sign of life as among the ruins of Thebes. Of many, the gates appeared to have been closed for ages; of some, the side-door was half open, revealing stately quadrangles, deserted and decaying; one was still occupied as a convent; while, through the portals of a very few, glimpses were obtained of bright flowers arranged in those prim and gaudy masses which the French so much admire. The only movement visible in the town was along the canal which winds through it, and down which barges were constantly passing, so quaint and Dutch-looking in build, and so bedizened with colours, that we could almost fancy ourselves in Holland. The cathedral is an ancient and magnificent building, containing altars rich with gold paintings and sculpture. In going through it we found on the left side a huge stone sarcophagus, over which was a notice purporting that it contained the bones of some great saint with an unpronounceable Dutch name, by means of the thank-offerings for whose miraculous cures this cathedral had been originally founded. From this we visited the ruins which had once formed part of a still grander edifice—that of the abbey church of St. Bertin, destroyed in the Revolution under the Directory. Over the gateway

the inscription was still legible, 'Sanctum Divi Bertini templum castè memento ingredi;' but of this once splendid building nothing now remains but the gigantic tower and a few pinnacles. It was the favourite church of the learned Alban Butler, who wrote 'The Lives of the Saints,' and lived in this town as President of the English College. This establishment exists no longer, but was remarkable as the place in which Daniel O'Connell received his education for the priesthood.

The pure air and the exercise which these investigations necessitated, began in time to produce a beneficial effect on our appetites, and we directed our steps towards the principal street. This—the Rue de Commandant, for St. Omer is fortified—we traversed with no satisfactory result; but found accommodation at an unpretentious inn in a less fashionable quarter. It was named the 'Hôtel de Commerce;' but how different was it from an English commercial hotel. True, everything was plain and simple to a degree; the room into which we were shown had a round straw mat in the place of a carpet, and its only ornaments, if such they could be called, consisted of rows of pears, ranged very regularly on shelves along the wall. But its neatness and cleanliness could not be surpassed. Here was no dubious tablecloth, no waiter wiping your plate with his pocket-handkerchief; the linen was spotless as the driven snow, and the glass sparkled like Alpine crystal. The dinner, which was served by the landlady and her assistant, in their prim white caps, consisted of seven excellent courses, the whole charges for four persons, including a bottle of St. Julien, was only ten francs.

Our next expedition was to Watteu, where we visited the ancient convent, and again met with Dutch-looking barges of all kinds and sizes; from the Express boat for Dunkerque, gliding along merrily behind a pair of horses and a huge postillion, to the torpid craft of

burden, whose snail-like progress depended on the exertions of one man, and was towed by a line attached to the top of a flexible rod set upright like a mast. We found that in this, as well as in our succeeding excursions, our best plan was to make an early breakfast before starting, and to return at night to Calais, as we could not usually obtain good accommodation elsewhere. There, in our hotel, everything was not only comfortable, but luxurious. The dinners were first-rate, and we were especially pleased with the waitress who attended us, who was one of the neatest and most willing of serving-women. She was dressed in the costume of the peasantry, and was a remarkably fine specimen of a Frenchwoman—tall and well-grown, and of such proportions as are best suited to activity and strength. She seemed to be made of sterner stuff than English women generally are, and wanted that softness which we so much admire; but her features were regular; her complexion, though toned, was clear and unsullied, and her countenance was of that heroic cast of which French sculptors are so fond, and which imparts sublimity to statues of Freedom. We heard that she was not in good health, and, although she never complained, we were concerned to see her working so incessantly, and carrying such heavy burdens. But what struck me as most remarkable about her was, that she refused to accept money. Arethusa's light heart and foot occasioned many little domestic misfortunes, and, I regret to say, much unnecessary work; but on my wife's offering Louise—for such was her name—some compensation, she only laughed, said she would receive nothing, and that it was a pleasure to do anything for 'mademoiselle.' Such conduct was to me most unaccountable. I had never before met with any person who refused an offer of money, except one poor woman who had shortly afterwards to be placed in a lunatic asylum.

(To be continued.)

LES JEUX ATHLETIQUES.

'WHEN you get to St. Malo, don't go there, but to St. Servan.'

These directions may appear paradoxical to the uninitiated, but I took the advice that was given me, and found it sound and good. You see, St. Malo proper, the quaint old city within the walls, the old-fashioned place with the five-story gabled houses, and narrow streets, rivals that other fair city of Cologne in one sad particular. There are strange, unnatural, choleraic smells about the place; and though it is allowable to put your handkerchief up to your nose when you thread its labyrinthine mazes by day, it is quite impossible to keep your bedroom window open by night.

St. Malo is built on a peninsula, and is separated from the Anglicized suburb of St. Servan by the narrowest possible strip of land. The St. Servan houses are washed by the sea; the St. Servan streets, though odoriferous at times, have not the everlasting odour which clings to the St. Malo alleys. St. Servan boasts of society and leads the fashion; and, what was by far the most consequence to me, St. Servan numbers amongst its hotels one of the cheeriest little places I have ever had the luck to fall across, kept by as charming and good-natured an English lady as I have ever met.

'Mind you go to Mrs. C——'s hotel; and, remember, don't be persuaded into putting up at St. Malo,' said my Mentor; or rather, to be accurate, the wife of my Mentor, as we three—what a pleasant party it was!—sat eating bread and honey among the carnations, that grew in profusion in the little old Frenchwoman's garden overlooking Rozel Bay in the Island of Jersey.

Mentor *et sa femme* were passing through Jersey on their way home from France. I was to start next morning, in a fishing-boat, to be landed somewhere or other on the coast of France, but where I did not precisely know or care. My friends made me die with laughing at their description of the various folks I

should find at Mrs. C——'s. They primed me with chaff to fire at the hypochondriacal Indian civil servant, as hale and hearty, and as jolly a fellow as could be found, who had a *penchant* for tartlets and other toothsome dainties, and a fixed idea that his liver was so diseased that he was a doomed man. They told me of Madame and Madame's 'chat,' who was invariably getting lost or eaten or boiled; of the fussy 'notaire' who dined at the table d'hôte every day, and touted to let or sell the Villa Cuba, on whose merits he expatiated so loudly and persistently, that he made Mr. Brian Boru, an honest, plain-spoken Irishman, relieve himself of such a volley of invectives, in English asides, that we were all in an agony of fear lest the 'notaire' had not, by chance, on his travels picked up a word or so of our mother tongue. They told me of the Colonel and the Colonel's child, with a face like one of Raphael's angels; in fact, they told me so much, and so far excited my curiosity, that when at last I got to St. Malo I did go to St. Servan.

'I don't know where I'm to put you, sir,' were Mrs. C——'s first words. 'We are perfectly full.'

I protested I had come all the way to St. Servan on purpose to put up at Mrs. C——'s. 'Had she the heart to turn me out?'

'Would you mind an attic?'

'Not in the least.'

And so I went to the attic, the airiest and best bedroom by far in the house as it turned out. The window looked out upon the sea, and when I opened it at night the pleasant booming of the water on the rocks below lulled me comfortably to sleep.

I had not been in St. Servan half an hour before I met, most unexpectedly, one of my most intimate friends. There were a few minutes to spare before table d'hôte, so I took myself off to inspect the ferry, which I had been told was the nearest and by far the most convenient way to St. Malo. A boat full of passengers had just arrived at the steps. One

by one I watched the passengers disembark. A handsome St. Bernard dog first attracted my attention. He had something in his mouth. Where had I seen that dog before? Not in the Regent's Park! Up the steps came the owner, there was no doubt of that. Boating shoes, thick-set frame, general get-up most decidedly English! Pot-hat! Kingston ribbon! Could it be possible! Of course!

It was the Captain!

There was a wild yell of recognition on both sides which made poor Alphonse stare. He was not accustomed to such a burst of enthusiasm from the lips of any Englishman.

The Captain (I will call him so for the future, seeing that he led our little English company at St. Malo) had been at St. Servan for some weeks, and he meditated staying some weeks longer. He was there with his 'people,' he said, and was reading very hard. I knew very well what that meant. I have been acquainted with the Captain for some years now, and he is always reading very hard. To the best of my knowledge, however, I have never seen him with a book in his hand. I have called for him at his chambers scores of times, and never found him at home. Five minutes' conversation with the Captain told me his exact position at St. Servan. Gifted as he was—singularly gifted, I may say—in the art of hitting a sixer to leg, rowing stroke in a four oar, running a two-mile race, playing a game at billiards, swimming round the Fort, dancing till any hour in the morning, and singing and playing with sympathy, consummate taste and skill, my friend the Captain was evidently an acquisition at St. Servan. He was looked up to and quoted as an authority by the little band of university men, public school boys, barristers, officers, civil servants *cum multis aliis* who happened to be in St. Servan or St. Malo; and as to the women—well, they hung about the piano and insisted on the most perfect silence when he sung German Lieder in his sweet persuasive voice, and were invariably talking about

and quoting 'the young tutor and his dog.' How they got hold of that notion about the tutor I can't conceive. He was no more a tutor than I was; but they stuck to their original notion, and in a few days talked of me as the 'tutor's friend.'

'I say, old boy, look here,' said the Captain, seizing me by the arm, and half dragging me across the street. 'Do you see that blue bill? Read it, and tell me what you think of it.'

I read the heading, which was as follows:—

'Joux Athlétiques d'Amateurs,

À la Caserne de St. Servan,

Par permission de M. le Colonel du 75 Régiment d'Infanterie.

14 Août, 1868.'

Then followed the list of sports and the names of the committee and stewards. The Captain was the hon. sec.

'Athletic sports,' said I; 'that will be no end of fun. But I had no idea that there were enough English here to get them up or ensure their achieving anything like success.'

'My dear fellow,' said the Captain, 'these races are creating the most profound excitement. The French officers do nothing but chatter about them; and as to the English girls here, they have behaved in the most plucky manner, and collected every farthing of the money for the prizes. If only to repay their kindness, we must try and make these races go off well.'

'There are some good names in the list of stewards,' said I.

'Oh, yes, there are plenty of well-known Eton, Harrow, and Marlborough men staying here. But what do you think of this?'

He pointed with his finger to the last line of the bill—

'Le Juge—Dalhousie MacGregor, Esq.'

'It's our only fictitious name,' he said; 'and I thought I'd get a good one while I was about it.'

The captain would not hear of my leaving France in three days' time, as I had originally intended. So, bribed with the pleasant prospect of lots of dances, pic-nics, croquet parties, fascinating acquaintances, and, above

stung with a sudden enthusiasm, and behaved thoroughly well. They certainly contributed not a little to the fun of the meeting. A hurdle-race of French soldiers in their heavy baggy trousers, with as much idea of jumping a hurdle as an elephant, was as laughable a sight as I have ever witnessed. They were not content with falling. They somehow entwined their feet in the hurdles, and ran away with them. The running costume of Alphonse—the amateur gentleman Alphonse, I mean—was not bad. Tight groom's trousers, with drab gaiters, high buttoned-up waistcoat with sleeves à la Sam Weller, and a green velvet hunting cap. In this get up Alphonse considered himself invincible. However, we will not laugh, for Alphonse is delighted with athletic sports, and promises if we will get up some more next year that he will be proficient at everything.

The races went off with the greatest spirit, and were a grand success. Alphonse nearly won one race, but he consoled himself after defeat with the reflection that he could hardly be expected to win when his opponent was so very much taller than himself! There was not a hitch all day, and when a prominent member of last year's Westminster eleven jumped 5 feet 4 inches in height, and a Harrow boy ran a mile in 4 minutes 43

seconds, Alphonse shrugged his shoulders, and murmured, 'Sapristi! Sacré Dieu!'

I have mentioned before that the ladies collected the money for the prizes. They did more than this, for they gave the prizes away, and an intelligent observer might have noticed a pretty little arrangement by which each winner received his prize from the hand of—well, this is betraying confidence. Anyhow, there were a good many blushes on both sides. Women do manage these things so uncommonly well. We made the old barrack-yard ring with hearty English cheers before we parted, the loudest of which were for 'The Ladies,' 'The French,' and 'The Captain.' They all deserved them thoroughly, for to them was due all the success of 'Les Jeux Athlétiques.'

One word more. Notwithstanding all our exertions that day—we went madly in for every race, of course—they gave us a ball afterwards. We kept it up until five o'clock. It was a moonlight night, very soft and very clear, and after every round dance two imprudent young people looked out upon the deserted Square from an open French window. The 'Chic' girl said she had never met anybody who talked so strangely. Unhappily, but perhaps luckily for me, I left St. Malo for England at seven o'clock the next morning.

C. W. S.







From the Painting by Augustus Bouvier.]

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

[See "Sybaris to Lydia."

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

*Sybaris to Lydia.**(Considering what she should inscribe on her Tablets.)*

'Lydia, dic, per omnes
Te deos, oro, Sybarin
Cur properas amando.

'Perdere? cur apricum
Oderit campum, patiens
Pulveris atque solis?'

HORACE, '*Ad Lydiam.*'

I TAKE not oracles of life
From bounding pulse or writhing vein;
From the arena's dusty strife;
From thought or fancy, joy or pain.
I trust no more the senses five;
My heart demands a subtler sign,
And only then is sure I live
When it can tell me I am thine.

'Tis not to mirrors sought by stealth
I sue for proofs of manly grace;
I do not gather signs of health
From forehead smooth and ruddy face;
I care no more to gauge the swell
Of lungs within a heaving chest;
If my heart tell me all is well—
My heart and thou—I leave the rest.

It is not from the flying leap;
The well-thewed limb of might and length;
The voice, like Stentor's, loud and deep—
'Tis not from these I prove my strength.
I reckon no more of outward show,
Whilst powers unseen to me belong;
Alcides' self might fear a blow
When thy love bids me to be strong.

I do not count my hoarded gold
Till even the growing figures tire;
I reckon not the mines I hold;
The jewels and the stones of fire.
I do not tell my gems of art,
Nor treasures of the land and sea;
I cast out all to fill my heart
With more than Croesus' wealth in thee.

I do not ask the painless day,
The unconscious night and dreamless sleep,
The song, the dance, the shifting play,
The dearer joys that bid me weep—

Not these I ask, in doubtful tone,
If they will deign my life to bless;
Why mock their weakness? thou alone
The secret hast of happiness.

When I would know if cloudless light
And golden weather bless the day;
If gentleness brood o'er the night,
And all but peace is far away:
I do not ask if storms are fled;
If sun or moon is bright the while:
All things are gathered to a head—
I question only, Dost thou smile?

I do not ask my halting mind
If I am witty or am wise;
If I am pitiful or kind;
Or gallant in a thousand eyes.
I reckon not of the world without;
I would not my own judgment prove;
My heart resolves me of my doubt:
I am all these if thou dost love.

With soul as Vestal's fair and pure;
With heart like Sappho's in a flame;
Both in one tender word secure,
Upon thy tablets write my name.
And near it write this burning plea:—
Half of my life is, to be thine;
Trembles the other half with thee—
The other half—that thou art mine!

A. H. G.



A ROMANCE IN A BOARDING HOUSE.

A FEW years ago, on my return from India, I was perplexed where to locate myself for the winter months. I did not at all relish the idea of entering a new house at such an unfavourable season; so my friends advised me to board somewhere till the spring of the coming year, and in the mean time I could look about me, and arrange my future plans. I resolved to follow this advice, and it was even suggested to my mind, that if I found this style of living agreeable, I might continue it for the whole year that must elapse before my husband joined me, in preference to burdening myself, while alone, with the responsibility of a house of my own.

According to further instructions from obliging friends, I caused an advertisement to be inserted in the 'Times,' to the effect 'That a lady just returned from India required board and residence, where she would have pleasant and select society, and a comfortable home, in return for liberal remuneration.'

I was positively inundated with answers. Some from ladies who 'merely received a few inmates into their home circle for the sake of society,' but who quite repudiated the notion of keeping a 'boarding house.' Some from the widows of professional men, who were 'compelled, through the death of their lamented partners, to add to their limited incomes by admitting strangers into the bosom of their families;' but very few who seemed to pride themselves upon their 'old-established houses,' the excellent table kept, the patronage of distinguished foreigners, and sociable whist evenings, and to none of these latter ones would my friends hear of my going; though, for my own part, I scarcely liked the idea of intruding upon any of those 'strictly private families,' who evidently thought the privilege a very great one, and named the remuneration they would kindly accept at a proportionately high rate.

After useless and innumerable
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interviews, besides a host of letters, I became thoroughly stupid and bewildered; and having arrived at this point fell an easy prey to one who evidently understood the business most thoroughly. Mrs. Wilson, my captor, took great pains to impress me with the fact that her connections were most 'genteel,' and, therefore, 'she never took any one into her house but people of the highest respectability; for she had too much regard for the memory of the late Mr. Wilson to act otherwise.'

Her house was situated in a nice part of Bayswater; it was well furnished, and well managed by the clever widow, who seemed to know how to look after her own interests; and, in spite of 'former days,' when she 'had lavished money recklessly,' she had acquired since as fair a notion of the value of £ s. d. as it was possible for any one to have if they had studied the matter all their lives.

When I made my *début* in the drawing-room the first evening of my arrival, shortly before dinner was announced, in addition to a sort of general introduction, Mrs. Wilson favoured me with an especial one to the few whom she evidently considered the *crème* of the assembly.

They were, Mrs. Colonel Stacey, a tall, stiff old lady, with white hair and a faded but still handsome face, and the manner and deportment of a perfect gentlewoman; but, as I soon discovered, one who was ever on the alert to obtain the best of everything for herself, and take out the full value of her money. Mrs. Wilson thought it such an advantage to have a real colonel's widow, that she yielded to her whims and fancies (not a few), and consulted her taste in the choice of viands, &c.; and Mrs. Stacey took good care to keep up this feeling, and managed to inspire, not only Mrs. Wilson, but the other inmates of the establishment, with a certain amount of awe towards her. She did not receive me with much cordiality, and I think it was because she had a kind of

idea that I might try to usurp her place, on the strength of coming from India; but she was slightly reassured when she heard that my husband 'only' held a civil appointment. Mrs. and Miss Primrose, on the contrary, overwhelmed me with civilities, and might have known me for years. The former bore the remains of good looks, and was attired in the deepest of widow's weeds, a style of dress which became her, and was for this reason still worn; for her husband, I found, had been defunct many years. Still she never made any allusions to him without heartrending sighs, and even applications to her eyes of a deeply black-bordered cambric pocket-handkerchief; and she fastened her collar with a funeral brooch containing his hair.

Lavinia Primrose was a gushing, sentimental young lady (of seven or eight-and-twenty I should have said, had her mother not told me that she was just nineteen). She was attired in light muslin and fluttering ribbons, and though not bad-looking, she spoilt herself by an unmeaning simper, and a profusion of feathery ringlets that made her head look very much like a mop.

Mrs. Primrose was quite confidential, and during the little time we waited for dinner, she told me that she had to make many sacrifices for her dear girl's health, which was very delicate. She had given up a perfect 'mansion' near town, because the air was not considered so good; and she submitted to the discomforts of a boarding house that she might be ready to start off for Italy at the slightest appearance of a change for the worse, for the dear girl, she feared, was consumptive, and of such a nervous, finely-wrought nature, that she required the most tender care.

For my own part I could not discover anything particularly delicate in the round face and rather too plump figure of the young lady; so I ventured to suggest that she would very likely outgrow the dreaded symptoms, and that even now I could not pay her the bad compliment to say she looked ill.

Mrs. Primrose thanked me for my sympathy with her handkerchief raised to her eyes, and added that dear Livy's complexion was so brilliant that it deceived many people. She then pointed out a Captain Vernon, and in a loud whisper, which I felt sure he heard, informed me that he was the younger son of a noble family, but had the advantage over most younger sons, of inheriting a country estate and fine fortune from his mother; and having seen plenty of active service, he had now retired on his laurels, and she thought would take a wife and settle down to a quiet home life. She said this so significantly, that I could only conclude that her daughter was his choice; and yet, as I looked at him, I could scarcely think such a man would choose such a woman. He was apparently about forty, and though not positively handsome, there was something noble and aristocratic in his face, and soldier-like and commanding in his tall, fine figure. The expression of his clear blue eyes was frank and open, and the lines of his mouth firm and decided, with a touch of satire. He was polite and attentive to all the ladies, and if rather more so to Lavinia than to the rest, it was apparently because she drew it forth. At dinner I had an opportunity of observing the rest of the company. There were two sisters, Miss White and Miss Bella White; the elder a noisy, rather vulgar woman, who made fun of every one in a good-natured sort of way, and laughed long and loudly at her own jokes, which sometimes went home too severely to be enjoyed by those against whom they were directed; the younger sister was quieter, and pretended to be shocked at 'Fan's' outbursts, but she was more objectionable with her affectation and over-attempts to be a lady than the other with her noise and coarseness. There was a quiet old lady who did not talk much, and took everything and everybody just as she found them. A thin, tall, elderly city gentleman took the bottom of the table; he wore a rusty black tail-coat, a stiff white neckcloth, and high shirt-collars: his manner was

grave and impressive, and he dignified every lady with the appellation of 'Mum,' and tried to be particularly civil to the eldest Miss White. There was also a stout stockbroker, who wore a short cut-away coat and a coloured necktie, with a red blotchy face and straight brown hair, who never looked off his plate (except to address Miss Bella White), and kept one in a state of alarm lest he should have a fit of apoplexy.

Remarks upon the fare at table were pretty freely made on all sides, and I was surprised to find how coolly our hostess listened to them (they would have been in such a different strain had the company been 'visitors' instead of 'boarders'). Mrs. Stacey complained of everything, and kept enumerating the things she was sure must be in season, and 'quite reasonable,' and wondering that Mrs. Wilson did not see about them; still she managed to make a very good dinner, and partook of every dish with the air of a martyr.

The fair Lavinia's appetite was such as might be expected from the delicate creature her mother had described her to be; but as I afterwards found that she made an early tea in her own room at five o'clock, I was no longer surprised. But she seemed to think that her neighbour, the Captain, ought not to be hungry either, for she plied him continually with questions, and allowed him little time for eating.

After we had returned to the drawing-room, the eldest Miss White sat by me and entered into conversation, and kept me on what is called 'thorns,' by the remarks she made about every one in her loud key. She informed me that Captain Vernon had been to Mrs. Wilson's four years running, and that Lavinia Primrose and her mother were trying hard to catch him, as he was worth having; that it was all very fine of Mrs. Primrose to ape the grand lady now, but that she could remember the time, not so very far back either, when Mrs. Primrose had kept the 'Green Dragon' in Cheapside, and that Lavinia's fortune was not anything

worth making a fuss over; then she laughed at the notion of her being only nineteen, and said she would vouch for her being at least thirty.

I said that it appeared to me rather a pleasant way of living as we were doing.

'Yes, indeed it is,' she replied. 'There is no place like a boarding house for fun and love-matches. Bell and I have been in no end, but I do believe this is poor Bell's last one, for Jones there (indicating the apoplectic gentleman) is evidently smitten; and I believe she will give in, and leave me in the lurch after all, though we both always vowed to remain single.'

'But another gentleman is very attentive to you,' I replied, seeing that the free-and-easy style was the custom of the house.

'Did you though?' said Miss White, quite pleased. 'Well, I rather think he has a hankering after my ten thousand pounds, but he won't get it; for I am not to be taken in with soft words and fine speeches, and intend to lead a jolly life, bound to obey no man's unreasonable whims and fancies.'

While chatting thus the door opened, and a young lady, whom I had not yet seen, entered. Her beauty could not fail to attract instant attention; her features were regular, her complexion that peculiar waxy pink and white, her eyes a clear true blue, and her hair, which was perfectly golden, was drawn in wavy luxuriance off her broad forehead, and gathered at the back into a massive bow. She was tall, with a figure of rounded proportions, and even in her dress of plain black alpaca, and simple linen collar and cuffs, she looked stylish and lady-like.

'Who is that lovely girl?' I asked eagerly of Miss White.

'Oh! that is Miss Maitland. Her father was a poor curate, who died from overwork and starvation, and his wife soon followed, leaving this girl alone without a relation in the world; so she turned her musical talents to account, and gives lessons all day. Mrs. Wilson knew something of her, I fancy, and she has been here for the last two years,

helping to amuse the boarders, and paying some very trifling sum for a home. She plays and sings very well, as you will hear presently; but until Mrs. Stacey has finished her nap the piano is not allowed to be touched.

'Miss Maitland looks sad,' I remarked.

'Oh, as for that,' she replied, 'she won't be friendly with any one, but sits like a statue, without speaking. Last winter I fancied the Captain was struck with her pretty face, but she tossed her head at him, and gave herself as many airs as though she had been a young woman of fortune, instead of a poor music-teacher tramping the streets of London, and going from house to house, wet or fine, for half-a-crown an hour.'

'Poor girl,' I said, compassionately. 'It is a sad position for one born a lady, and endowed with beauty and talents.'

'Well, so it is,' said Miss White; 'and that is why I say there is nothing like a good trade. Now my father rose from a mere shopboy, but he managed to leave twenty thousand pounds behind him; and, without seeking it, I got more respect and attention, because I am independent, than the clergyman's daughter, who probably congratulates herself upon having no relations or friends in trade.'

Mrs. Stacey now made her reappearance, and I noticed that she gave the young musician a patronizing shake of the hand, and as soon as settled in her arm-chair, called out, 'Now then, my dear, give us one of your pretty songs.' Captain Vernon advanced to lead her to the piano, and though he had but greeted her with a bow when she first came in, he now held out his hand. She took it formally, and then intimated, that as she sang and played without notes, she would dispense with his presence at the piano.

He looked vexed, and returned to his place by Lavinia's side, and began talking to her in a most animated strain. Every now and then she interrupted him with, 'La! Captain Vernon, don't talk

such nonsense! you make me quite vain.' Then there was the mother's echo. 'Now, Captain, I mustn't let you excite Livy so, or she won't sleep a wink all night.' But Miss Maitland began to sing, and the hum of tongues ceased. Her voice was replete with exquisite sweetness, and she sang with such simple, unaffected taste and expression, that I introduced myself, on purpose to thank her for the treat she had given me. She seemed pleased, and accorded me a bright smile, which at once won my heart. Her office was no sinecure, for she was called upon for song after song, and looked quite weary and worn when we parted for the night.

From that first evening Hilda Maitland wound herself unconsciously round my affections in a manner that surprised myself. First, my advances of friendship were as coldly treated as those of others, but at last she saw that mine was not insolent patronage, but warm liking, and then she seemed quite glad to have found a true friend.

She told me that all her life, short as it was, had been one continued chain of trials and privations; for her father had, as Miss White said, literally died of starvation, and for some time she was only able to earn very little; so that when her mother also laid down the burden of life, it was for her own loneliness only that she grieved. Now she could make sufficient to support herself, and, with strict economy, save a little; but it was hard, trying work, and a joyless life for one young and gifted.

Lavinia Primrose disliked her cordially, for she was jealous of her superior attractions, and feared her as a rival, and she sought to annoy and mortify her in every way worthy of one so narrow-minded. When I had made my observations for a short time, I likewise fancied that Captain Vernon admired Hilda, but she gave him no visible encouragement, and in a sort of pettish pique he flirted with Miss Primrose, for whom it was easy to see he did not care a straw. But as Hilda never introduced the Captain's name in our conversations, I thought it

better not to broach the subject either.

One morning Mrs. Wilson (who from the commencement of my sojourn in her house had seemed to think that I was an easily-managed boarder) came into my room in great tribulation, to tell me that the 'Primroses' threatened to leave at the end of their week, unless Miss Maitland was instantly sent away; as they considered her a low, designing person, and declared that her manner with Captain Vernon was forward and presuming.

'I cannot afford to lose two good payers, nor do I like sending the poor girl among strangers again, as I really don't think she has meant any harm,' she continued; 'besides I don't believe Mrs. Colonel Stacey would like to be without music now; it was one of the things that made her come to live here.'

'Tell Mrs. Primrose and her daughter that you cannot possibly comply with their request, Mrs. Wilson,' I said, 'for their accusations are perfectly unfounded; and should Miss Maitland have to leave in consequence I shall accompany her; for, like yourself, I do not think it right to throw a beautiful young woman like she is needlessly about the world; there are too many wicked enough to take advantage of youth and innocence. Miss Lavinia is herself the one whose conduct is improper, but my own idea is that she will never win her game. One thing, however, you may be sure of—that they will not leave so long as Captain Vernon remains.'

And thus the storm passed over; but I think Mrs. Wilson gave Hilda a few hints about what had passed, for her manner towards Vernon was more freezing than ever; though, from certain signs, which a woman alone can detect, I began to feel sure that she really loved him, but for some private reasons she would not allow him to see it.

After this Lavinia seemed seized with a violent friendship for Hilda, and sought her company as much as she had hitherto despised it. She even went so far as to talk of having a few singing lessons from her, but this Miss Maitland declined, on

the plea that her time was fully occupied. But in spite of her drawing back Lavinia would confide to her that Captain Vernon had all but made the offer to her, and she did not think it would be long before she became Mrs. Vernon. 'And do you know,' she continued, giggling, 'at one time I was a little jealous of you, but the Captain has assured me without a cause.'

'Quite so,' replied Hilda, coldly, but she did not encourage further conversation.

One evening shortly after this Mrs. Primrose addressed Hilda in a loud tone from the further end of the room, saying:

'So you would not acknowledge us this afternoon, Miss Maitland, though I bowed, and my daughter waved her hand.'

'I never saw you, Mrs. Primrose,' she replied. 'But I suppose I was walking quickly, as I usually am.'

'No, not at all,' replied the lady, significantly. 'I mean when you were in the park. But it was quite excusable, my dear, with such a good-looking companion as you had to engross your attention. I suppose we shall be losing you soon?'

'It isn't fair of you to speak out before every one, ma,' said Lavinia, with a simper. 'Of course Miss Maitland will tell us all about it in good time. But I must say,' she added, trying to look arch, 'that you are very sly about it.'

Hilda blushed a deep crimson, but she replied, proudly, 'I really do not understand you, Miss Primrose.' Then catching Captain Vernon's eye fixed upon her with an expression of pain and surprise, she moved to the piano without another word.

Miss Primrose had evidently effected her object—more successfully even than she had dared to expect; for Captain Vernon, ungenerous though it might be, was fully impressed with the notion that Hilda was meeting some one clandestinely, and her blushes and proud manner of disdaining to deny it still more confirmed the belief; though really, if he had reasoned the matter over in his own mind, he might have

discovered that as she had no one to control her actions, no secrecy was needed, and if she were really engaged she could be so openly.

To me, in private, she said the whole was a fabrication, as she had never even been in the park; but she begged me to say nothing, as she merely told me because she thought it a duty to herself and my friendship for her.

A short time after this Captain Vernon went into the country, but fixed the day and hour of his return, and laughingly said he should expect us to welcome him back quite joyfully.

The day of his return arrived, but it was not till evening that he was to come. Just as we were sitting down to dinner Mr. Jones rushed in late, and informed us that there had been a fearful accident to the train by which Captain Vernon was to come; the news had been telegraphed up to London, and every one was in consternation, as the number of killed and injured was something fearful. We were all in a state of excitement and sorrow at the tidings, though many of us would not think that our frank, agreeable companion, so lately among us in health and spirits, was now lying a mangled corpse or a maimed sufferer. Lavinia was supported from the room by her mother, but she recovered sufficiently to reappear after dinner, and reclining languidly on the sofa, she alternately applied a smelling-bottle to her nose and a pocket-handkerchief to her eyes, and seemed to think herself an object of interest and tender compassion.

The poor Captain's sad death might indeed be a blow to her matrimonial speculations, but if she had a heart it certainly remained untouched.

I meant to have slipped away to have broken these dreadful tidings to Hilda in the privacy of her own room, for I dreaded the effect upon her; however, just as I was contemplating making my exit, she entered, and though deadly pale, seemed calm and collected as usual. She was immediately entertained with the news, but coldly replied

'that she had heard from the servant, and was exceedingly sorry.'

This remark was so commonplace that I felt quite angry with her; but she afterwards confessed to me that she was suffering martyrdom, and a sort of supernatural strength alone prevented her from breaking down beneath her agony; but cruel eyes were fixed upon her, and she knew that they would gloat over her misery, so she hid it deep, deep in the recesses of her constant heart.

Mrs. Stacey hated this kind of dulness, and asked, as usual, for some music; but for once her will was resisted, every one declaring that it would be most unfeeling, and Lavinia adding that 'she could not bear it.' She tried to enlist Mr. Jones's services for herself, first asking him to draw her sofa a little nearer the fire, then to fan her burning temples, and lastly to rub her hands; and all the while she cast such tender glances towards him that Miss Bella White was alarmed. Mr. Jones was worth catching, and Lavinia thought that he would do to fill the Captain's vacant place; though it was, after all, rather amusing to see how she gave us all to understand that there had been something between herself and Captain Vernon. Not that we believed it. All her blandishments, however, could not draw Mr. Jones from his allegiance to the fair Bella. Perhaps he thought that her ten thousand pounds was more substantial than the large fortune which was to be Miss Primrose's portion; anyhow, he performed the offices required of him very much as a bear might have done, but he would go no farther. We had all relapsed into a mournful silence, only broken by an occasional snore from Mrs. Stacey (who had grumbled herself into a second nap), when we were startled by a loud knock at the street-door, and the same thought struck us all, that it was the body of the unfortunate man being brought there, probably through some card or envelope in his pocket bearing that address. Mrs. Stacey, fully awakened, whispered in a sharp, nervous, audible tone—

'He must not be brought here. I would not stay in the house one hour with a corpse.'

Mrs. Wilson had always experienced great liberality from the Captain, as she herself allowed, and was really sorry for what had occurred, but she evidently agreed with Mrs. Stacey, that the Captain living and the Captain dead was not quite the same thing; so, giving a reassuring nod to the old lady, she prepared to leave the room, in order to refuse admittance to the unwelcome object. Before she could reach the door, however, it was flung open, and in came Captain Vernon himself, as full of health and spirits as when he parted from us.

'Mary has just informed me of my own death,' he exclaimed, gaily; 'in fact, she could not quite believe that I was actually flesh and blood, till she had carefully inspected me by the gas-lamp. She said, "You was all awful cut up;" for which I feel exceedingly flattered.' Then he added, more seriously, 'I am thankful that I came up by an earlier train, or I might indeed now be lying a mangled corpse, like so many other poor creatures. On my arrival in town I met an old fellow-officer, who insisted upon my dining with him at his club, and though he tried hard to persuade me to linger over the wine, I was not to be enticed; for, as I had told you to expect me this evening, and taking it for granted that you would all miss my society, I hastened away as soon as possible; though had I known that my friends were going to be so kindly anxious on my account, I certainly would not have subjected them to it.'

We all congratulated him warmly on his providential escape; and Lavinia, thinking this a favourable moment for forcing a declaration from her dilatory swain, detained the hand he held out to her, and then went off into violent hysterics. Mrs. Primrose expressed frantic alarm, declaring that no one knew what her dear sensitive child had suffered in the last few hours; and she implored the captain to speak to, and soothe her, and 'not let her lie there and die.'

He looked uncomfortable, and was beginning to say something expressive of thanks for so much interest on his behalf, when his glance fell upon a prostrate figure in a dark corner of the room. We had all forgotten Hilda Maitland, and there she lay, pale and deathlike.

With Miss Primrose, I, too, thought—now is the time to test his real feelings: so I whispered—

'The shock of seeing you safe, after the agonizing news, has been too much for her, poor girl!'

'Is this really on my account?' he replied, with a sudden gleam of happiness lighting up his manly features.

I nodded an assent.

Then, heedless of the wondering eyes fixed upon him, he folded her in his arms, and laid her drooping head upon his breast. This scene, which was not lost upon Lavinia, made her redouble her shrieks; and her mother, seeing that the game was up, became positively abusive.

'Bring her up to my room,' I whispered to Captain Vernon, pointing to the still unconscious Hilda, 'for it will not do for her to hear all this abominable language.'

'You are very kind, Mrs. Merton,' he replied, huskily; and lifting his precious burden tenderly as an infant, he carried her up in his strong arms and laid her upon my bed. Mrs. Wilson followed, and begged him to go back and just say a few words to Lavinia; but he sternly refused, declaring that Miss Primrose never had been, and never would be, anything to him. So our good hostess was obliged to go away in despair, saying, 'If poor dear Mr. Wilson only knew all the troubles and annoyances she had to endure, he wouldn't rest in his cold grave.'

I, in my turn, began to victimize the poor man, and immediately we were alone I said—

'Captain Vernon, I take a warm interest in this poor girl, and for her sake I wish to know how all this is to end?'

'By her becoming my wife,' he interrupted quickly; 'at least,' he added with sudden bitterness, 'if she be free—a fact which I must doubt.'

I reassured him on this point by telling him that the story the 'Primroses' told that day was all a fabrication, intended to mislead him, but I firmly believed that the injured girl cared only for him. At this moment she opened her large blue eyes, and as her glance fell upon Vernon they lost their terrified expression, and closed again as if satisfied, while she murmured, with a sigh of relief, 'Safe! safe!'

This was a stronger proof than any surmises of mine; and the delighted lover clasped her to him and exclaimed—

'Hilda! My own darling! You love me in spite of your cruel coldness, and now that I know it nothing shall come between us. You are mine!'

Perhaps it was against the strict rules of propriety—but I was not accustomed to English society—so my readers must not judge my morals harshly when I confess, that at this point I became deeply interested in what was passing without, and I allowed the lovers to whisper their mutual tale of doubts and fears, hope and happiness; while, with my face glued against the window at the other end of the room, I sought to distinguish the dusky figures who were threading their way through the dim, dismal-looking streets on that dreary November night. At length I discovered that lovers are the most selfish creatures in the world, and I might have kept my station all night for aught they cared; so I confronted them, and requested the Captain to make his adieux. But before I could get rid of the tiresome fellow he would make me all sorts of pretty speeches, which silly little Hilda echoed. At last he went, and I insisted upon the excited girl sharing my bed with me instead of returning to her own attic.

At an early hour the next morning Mrs. and Miss Primrose decamped, saying they could not possibly remain another day in a house where such proceedings were allowed. Mrs. Wilson was consoled for their loss by the Captain's assurance that, as he was the cause, she should not be any sufferer; and I

suspect she was, on the contrary, a very considerable gainer.

Christmas Day came in clear and frosty, and very pleasantly we spent it, having unanimously agreed to refuse all invitations. After dinner, under the protection of a piece of mistletoe, the Captain ventured to kiss the ladies all round, beginning with Mrs. Colonel Stacey (who received the salute most graciously, coming from military lips), and ending, last but not least, with his fair betrothed. A little later, under the exhilarating influence of whisky punch, Messrs. Jones and Brown intimated that they should likewise avail themselves of the privilege of the season; but as the proposal was not encouraged, Jones was satisfied with paying this delicate attention to his charming Bella; and Brown commenced and ended with the buxom hostess, who was much gratified, and would doubtless have been more so had Miss White appeared at all jealous.

On New Year's Day I dressed dear Hilda in her bridal robes, and very beautiful she looked. She had made objections, declaring that she was too poor and humble to wed with one well-born and rich; but he reminded her that she was a lady, and that was all his friends cared about; and that she possessed his deepest affection and gave him hers in return, and that was all he cared about. The only point he would yield was, to have the wedding quite private.

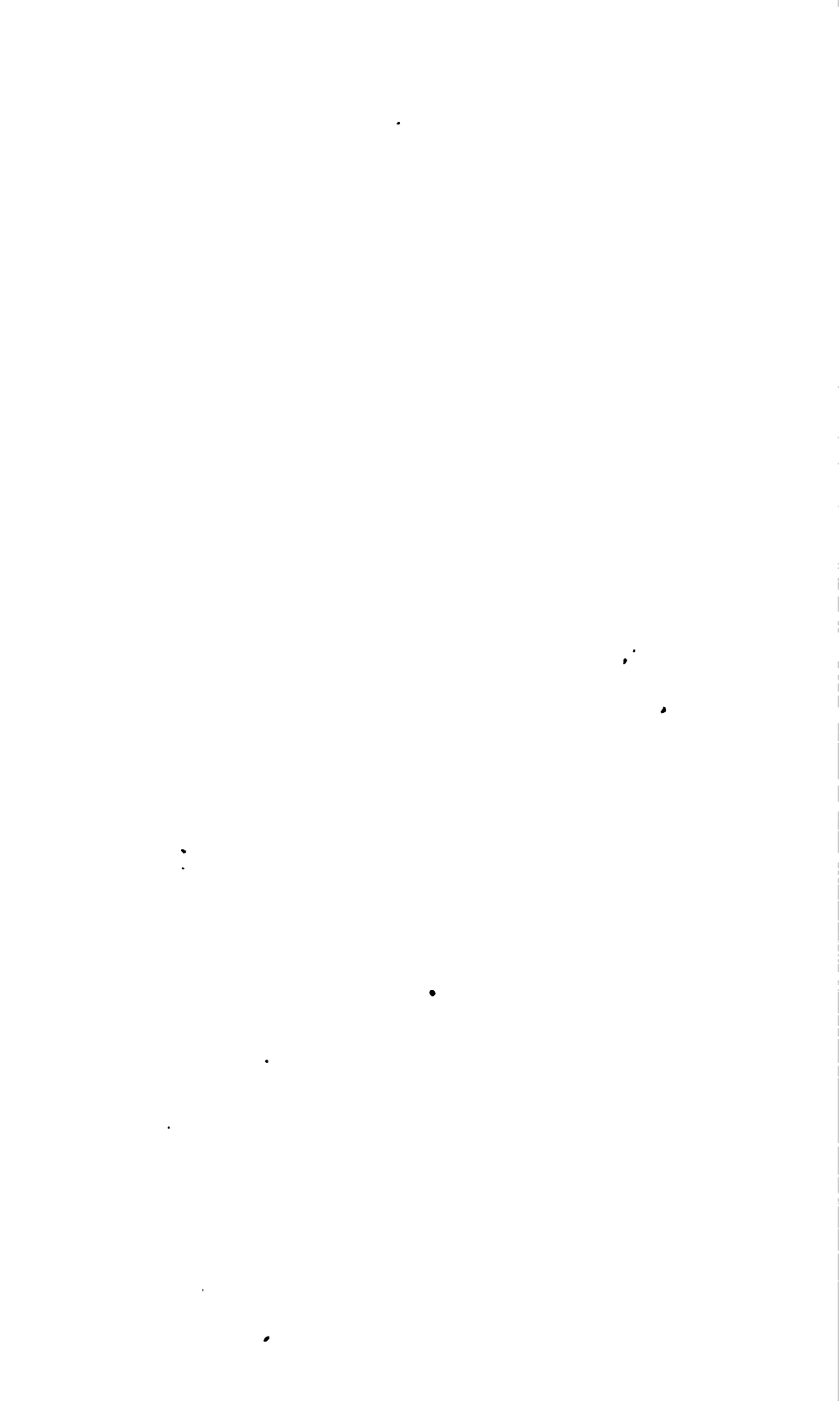
Every one in the house presented the bride with some little parting gift. Mrs. Stacey, always grand, extracted from the depths of a huge chest a very handsome but antiquated Indian scarf. As a poor, toiling, striving, music-mistress, an orphan and unknown in the world, Hilda Maitland met with no sympathy or kindness from the very people who suddenly evinced the warmest friendship for her when she was about to become a rich and happy wife, and needed it not.

Mr. Jones followed the good example, and brought his courtship to a speedy conclusion; so Miss Bella White became Mrs. Jones, and the



Drawn by Adelaide Claxton.]

A ROMANCE IN A BOARDING HOUSE.



happy couple went to reside at Islington. The city gentleman (Mr. Brown) failing in his attempts to induce Miss White to sacrifice her freedom, turned his attention to Widow Wilson, who was not such a bad speculation after all, and they very shortly after united their incomes and interests in the bonds of matrimony—the widow declaring that ‘her late lamented husband would rest more quietly in his grave if he knew she had found another protector.’

My husband returned some months earlier than I anticipated, so we settled in a home of our own, and have since had the pleasure of entertaining Captain and Mrs. Vernon and their infant son.

Lavinia Primrose, I hear, is at last successful in her matrimonial attempts, and is about to become Baroness von Schlossenhausen. The

baron is a bearded, middle-aged, smoking German, and says that he has hitherto been unjustly kept out of his hereditary rights, which causes him a little inconvenience in the matter of ready money. But all this will shortly be at an end, and he intends to conduct his bride to ‘Castle Schlossenhausen,’ where, he adds, her charming mother will always be an honoured and welcome guest.

The baron is not quite indifferent to the fair Lavinia’s large fortune, so it is to be hoped he will realize it; and as she is, in her place, much elated at the idea of acquiring a title, and living as mistress of a real castle, we trust that she may not, when too late, discover that, like many of the ‘Châteaux d’Espagne,’ her husband’s ancestral home is but a heap of ruins.



SOCIETY IN JAPAN.

ALL lustres fade, all types decay,
 That Time has strength to touch or tarnish;
 Japan itself receives to-day
 A novel kind of varnish.
 All Asia moves; in far Thibet
 A fear of change perturbs the Lama;
 You'll hear the railway whistle yet
 Arousing Yokohama!

Methinks it were a theme for song,
 This spread of European knowledge;
 Gasometers adorn Hong-Kong,
 Calcutta keeps a college.
 Palo Ale and Cavendish maintain
 Our hold amongst the opium-smokers;
 Through Java jungles runs the train,
 With Dutchmen for the stokers.

The East is doomed; Romance is dead,
 Or surely on the point of dying;
 The travellers' books our boyhood read
 Would now be reckoned lying.
 Our young illusions vanish fast;
 They're obsolete—effete—archaic;
 The hour has come that sees at last
 The Orient prosaic!

The Brother of the Sun and Moon
 Has long renounced his claims excessive;
 And now we find a new Tycoon,
 Who styles himself 'progressive.'
 Where once the Dutch alone could trade,
 With many a sore humiliation,
 The flags are flauntingly displayed
 Of every western nation.

Our artist—some celestial Leech,
 Or pig-tailed Hogarth, sharp and skittish—
 Has drawn, upon a nameless beach,
 A group of aimless British.
 As gently, in the summer breeze,
 The ribbons and the ringlets flutter,
 They fill the gaping Japanese
 With thoughts they cannot utter.



Drawn by Luke Limner, F.S.A.]

SOCIETY IN JAPAN.

[See the Poem.

The steamers in the distance smoke ;
The Titan-Steam begins its functions :
There'll be a market soon for coke,
When junks give way to junctions !
The oriental little boys,
Who now survey those startling vapours,
Will learn to shout, with hideous noise,
The names of morning papers !

The East is dying ; live the East !
With hope we watch its transformation ;
Our European life, at least,
Is better than stagnation.
The cycles of Cathay are run ;
Begins the new, the nobler movement :—
I'm half ashamed of making fun
Of Japanese improvement !

W. J. P.



CURIOSITIES OF FASHION.

In the Matter of One's Fash.

FASHION is society's Chancellor of the Exchequer, and fails not to tax the lieges with ingenuity and unrelenting sternness of purpose. Our readers will doubtless remember Sydney Smith's humorous illustration of the infinite varieties of taxation that beset the British taxpayer. Alas! he omitted from the terrible list—which, in a certain sense, may be said to be the English *libro d'oro*—the assessments, direct and indirect, the contributions, voluntary and involuntary, that Fashion levies. These are literally numberless, and envelope us in a mesh from which there is no escape. The dresses of our wives and sisters, the folds of their petticoats, the dimensions of their bonnets, the arrangement of their curls; the hats with which we cover our aching heads, the boots in which we torture our aching feet, the waistcoats that cover the British bosom, the broadcloth that develops the British back; our horses and our carriages, our houses and our furniture; the plays which we groan at, the books which we nod over; the wines that we drink ourselves, and the wines we give to our friends; the regiments in which we place our sons, the accomplishments which we teach our daughters; the hours of our rising and sleeping, dining and tea-ing; the powdered hair of our footmen, and the cauliflower wigs of our coachmen; do we not recognize thy finger on each and all of these, O Fashion? At home and abroad, Fashion follows us closely, like a phantom fell; and though the most evanescent and volatile of spirits, wields, nevertheless, a sceptre of iron. You don't like sensation novels, but to read them is—the fashion. You don't care about 'Bel Demonio,' but to admire it is—the fashion. You prefer an old-fashioned English dinner, full, substantial, abundant, and materialistic, to the lightness and insubstantiality of a *dîner à la Russe*, but then—the fashion! The wearisome canter up and down Rotten Row perplexes you

with an unutterable sensation of *ennui*, but—it is the fashion. Fashion makes you wear a hat that pinches your ample brow, and puts on Amanda's head a bonnet that does not become her. Fashion tempts you to live on a thousand a year when your income is only eight hundred. And Fashion—to be sparing of our instances—subscribed for the relief of wounded Danes, when English pluck and honesty no longer stood to the front in behalf of the weak and oppressed.

But perhaps the most personal and humiliating of Fashion's provocations is its interference with our food. Not even the kitchen and the *salle-à-manger* are safe from its vexatious intrusion. As sternly as an Abernethy to a dyspeptic patient, it says to society, 'Thou shalt eat, and this thou shalt not eat. That dish is vulgar; yonder *plat* is obsolete; none but the *canaille* partake of melted butter; only the ignorant immerse their souls in beer.' And changeable as that sex which is supposed to worship it most humbly, Fashion proscribes in 1863 what it sanctioned in 1763; and approves now, what in the days when George III. was king—*console planes*—it most sternly condemned. The meals which now do (too often) coldly furnish forth the table were regarded with contempt by our great-great-grandfathers. Fancy Sir Roger de Coverley examining a *salmi des perdrix* or a *pâté de foie gras*! In like manner the Honourable Fitzplantagenet Smith would regard as 'deuced low' the boar's head that delighted his cavalier ancestor, or the peacock pie that smoked upon Elizabethan boards.

In the year 1272, the then Lord Mayor of London issued an edict which fixed the prices to be paid for certain articles of provisions at the pence; a goose for fivepence; a wild goose, fourpence; pigeons, three for one penny; mallards, three for a halfpenny; a plover, one penny; a partridge, three-halfpence; a dozen of larks, one penny halfpenny; a

pheasant, fourpence; a heron, sixpence; a swan, three shillings; a crane, three shillings; the best peacock, one penny; the best coney, with skin, fourpence; and the best lamb, from Christmas to Lent, sixpence, at other times of the year, fourpence.

Now, out of the foregoing list of edibles, Fashion nowadays would strike the mallard, the heron, the swan, and the crane, and would look askant at the peacock.

But the peacock was of old a right royal bird, that figured splendidly at the banquets of the great, and this is how the mediæval cooks dished up the mediæval dainty:—'Take and flay off the skin with the feathers, tail, and the neck and head thereon; then take the skin and all the feathers and lay it on the table abroad, and strew thereon ground cummin. Then take the peacock and roast him, and baste him with raw yolks of eggs; and when he is roasted, take him off and let him cool awhile; then take him and sew him in his skin, and gild his comb, and so serve him forth with the last course.'

Our ancestors were very fond of savoury messes compounded on the gipsy's principle, of putting everything eatable into the same pot. A curious mixture must have been the following:—

'For to make a mooste choyce pæste of bamys to be etin at ye Feste of Chrystemasse (A.D. 1394).

'Take Fesaunt, Haare, and Chykeune, or Capounne, of eche cone; w^t ij. Partruchis, ij. Pygeonnes, and ij. Conyngys; and smyte hem on peces and pyke olene awaye p^rfo (therefrom) alle p^r (the) boonyes p^r (that) ye maye, and p^rwt (therewith) do hem ynto a Foyle (shield or case) of gode paste, made craftily yune p^r lykenes of a byrde's bodye, w^t p^r lyvurs (livers) and hertys, ij. kydnies of shepe and jaryes (forced meats) and eyrin (eggs) made ynto balles. Caste p^rto (thereto) poudre of pepyr, salte, spyce, eyssell (vinegar), and funges (mushrooms) pykled; and panne (then) take p^r boonyes and let hem seethe yune a pot to make a gode brothe p^rfor

(therefore—i.e., for it), and do yt ynto p^r foyle of paste, and close hit uppe faste, and bake y^e wel, and so s^rve (serve) y^e forthe: w^t p^r hede of come of p^r byrdes, stucke at p^r cone ende of p^r foyle, and a grete tayle at p^r op' and dyvers of hys longe fedys sette yune connynglye alle aboute hym.'

If any one of our readers should attempt this choice game-pasty, we shall thank him to make known to us the result of his experiment.

A favourite dish of our ancestors was—herring pie. In the town charter of Yarmouth it is provided that the burgesses shall send to the sheriffs of Norwich one hundred herrings, to be made into twenty-four pies, and these pies shall be delivered to the lord of the manor of East Carleton, who is to convey them to the king. Were these herrings fresh, or salted herrings? The latter was a popular edible with all classes of Englishmen, and have an historical importance from their connection with the famous *Bataille de Harengs*, one of the last victories won by the English in France.

The origin of the red herring is traditionally this:—A Yarmouth fisherman had hung up some salted herrings in his hut, where they remained for some days exposed to the smoke arising from a wood fire. His attention being then attracted to the forgotten dainties, he saw—ate—and wondered! The flavour so pleased his palate that, deeming what was good for a fisherman must be equally good for a king, he sent some of the smoke-cured fish to King John, who was then at or near Norwich. The monarch so much approved of them that he rewarded the purveyor by granting a charter of incorporation to the town of which he was a native.

Fish, indeed, was a much commoner article of diet with all classes of society in the 'good old days' than at present. If it figured at royal banquets as a dainty, it was placed on the tables of the poor as a necessity. Nothing is more astonishing than the prejudice of the lower orders now-a-days against fish. We have lived in seaside towns, and

seen it flung forth as offal by the half-starving families of the fishermen, who would thankfully accept, the next moment, a stranger's alms to purchase a fragment of rank and unsavoury meat. Our ancestors, on the other hand, were animated by a most laudable ichthyophagic zeal. Every monastery had its 'stews' and fishponds, if it did not happen to be planted in pleasant places on the bank of some fishful stream. Our kings preserved their fisheries as anxiously as a country squire preserves his game. Almost every kind of fish was good that came to our forefathers' nets. Fashion sanctioned sturgeon and lampreys (*Petromyzon fluviatilis*)—everybody knows that Henry I. surfeited himself with the latter, and died thereby—John Dories and stockfish, carps and crabs, mullets, gurnets, burs, ling, pilchards, nearly every fish

'That with their fins and shining scales
Glide under the green waves;'

Or,

'Sporting, with quick glance,
Show to the sun their wav'd coats dropp'd with
gold.'

Even whales, if stranded on our coasts, were salted and eaten; and in the bill of fare of the Goldsmiths' Company, we find enumerated 'blote, fish, fowls, and middles of sturgeons, salt lampreys, congers, pike, bream, bass, tench, chub, seal, and porpoise.'

In a fish-tariff issued by Edward I., mention is made of 'congers, lampreys, and sea-hogs.' Fancy Lady Mayfair inviting her guests to partake of a sea-hog! In the Earl of Northumberland's Household Book we find allowed for 'my Lord and Ladie's table,' 'ij. pecys of salt fische, vj. pecys of salt fische, vj. becormed herryng, iiij. white herryng, or a dish of sproots (sprats).' Certes, a deep draught of Canary or Malvoisie would be needed to wash down so dry a repast! Mackerel, a fish now so popular, is not mentioned earlier than 1247; but its good qualities so soon became generally recognized, that we read of it as a London street-cry in the ballad of 'London Lickpenny.'

Eels were exceedingly popular,

and the monks especially loved to feed upon them. The cellarees of Barking Abbey, Essex, in the ancient times of that foundation, was, amongst other eatables, 'to provide *russ aux* in Lenton, and to bake with elys on Shere Tuesday;' and at Shrovetide she was to have ready 'twelve stubbe eles and nine schaft eles.' The regulation and management for the sale of eels seems to have formed a prominent feature in the old ordinances of the Fishmongers' Company. There were artificial receptacles made for eels in our rivers, called Anguillonea, constructed with rows of poles, that they might be more easily taken. The cruel custom of salting eels alive is mentioned by some old writers.

Fashion did not set its seal upon turtle soups until a comparatively recent date. An entry in the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' August 31, 1753, proves that 'calipash and calipee' were still a rarity:—'A turtle, weighing 350 lb., was ate at the King's Arms tavern, Pall Mall; the mouth of an oven was taken down to admit the part to be baked.' Turtles have travelled eastward since then. One does not look nowadays for turtles in Belgravian hotels, but at the London Tavern or the Mansion House, and associate it as a thing of course with civic banquets and aldermanic paunches.

The great ministers of Fashion, its agents in enforcing its decrees upon unhappy society, have been the cooks—always a potent, a conceited, and, sooth to say, an ignorant fraternity. From the days of Aristoxenes and Arcestratus to those of Ude—Ude, who refused four hundred a year and a carriage when offered by the Duke of Richmond, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, because there was no Opera at Dublin—from the days of Arcestratus to those of Ude, they have studied rather the display of their inventive powers than the laws of physiology and the stomachs of their patrons. Ben Jonson furnishes us with an admirable description of one of these gentry, who are more solicitous about the invention of wonderful novelties than the provision of a

wholesome and sufficient dinner:—
'A master cook!' exclaims the poet;

'Why, he's the man of men
For a professor; he designs, he draws,
He paints, he carves, he builds, he fortifies;
Makes citadels of curious fowl and fish.
Some he dry-dishes, some moats round with
broths,
Mounts marrow-bones, cuts fifty-angled custards
Tears bulwark-pies, and for his outworks
He raiseth ramparts of immortal crust;
And teacheth all the tactics at one dinner:
What ranks, what files to put his dishes in;
The whole art military. Then he knows
The influence of the stars upon his meats,
And all their seasons, tempers, qualities;
And so to fit his relishes and sauces,
He has Nature in a pot, 'bove all the chemists,
Or airy brethren of the Rosy-Cross.
He is an architect, an engineer,
A soldier, a physician, a philosopher,
A general mathematician!'

It is the cooks who are responsible for the untasteful monstrosities and semi-poisonous *plats* that still figure in our bills of fare. Just as the cooks of ancient Rome served up to their patrons the membranous parts of the matrones of a sow, the echinus or sea-hedgehog, the flesh of young hawks, and especially rejoiced in a whole pig, boiled on one side and roasted on the other—the belly stuffed with thrushes, and yolks of eggs, and hens, and spiced meats; so the cooks of modern London love to disguise our food with an infinite variety of flavours, until the *natural* is entirely lost, and the most curious examiner is at a loss to detect the component parts of any particular dish. The ancient cooks, with a vegetable, could counterfeit the shape and the taste of fish and flesh. We are told that a king of Bithynia having, in one of his expeditions, strayed to a great distance from the seaside, conceived a violent longing for a small fish called *aphy*, either a pilchard, an anchovy, or a herring. His cook was a genius, however, and could conquer obstacles. He had no *aphy*, but he had a turnip. This he cut into a perfect imitation of the fish; then fried in oil, salted, and powdered thoroughly with the grains of a dozen black poppies. His majesty ate, and was delighted! Never had he eaten a more delicious *aphy*! But our modern cooks are not inferior to the ancient. Give them a partridge or a pheasant, a

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veal cutlet or a mutton chop, and they will so dish you up each savoury article that nothing of its original flavour shall be discernible! O Fashion! O cooks! O confectioners! We are your slaves, your victims; and our stomachs the laboratories in which you coolly carry out your experiments. Look, for instance, at vegetables: no food more wholesome, or more simple, and yet how the cooks do torture and manipulate them, until the salutary properties of these *cibi innocentes* utterly disappear!

The ancients, however, set us an excellent example with respect to the number of guests one should invite to dinner. Arcestratus, in his 'Gastrology,' thus enunciates his opinion:—

'I write these precepts for immortal Greece,
That round a table delicately spread,
Or three, or four, may sit in choice repast,
Or five at most, who otherwise shall dine
Are like a troop marauding for their prey.'

Just so. The present writer has before now had the evil fortune to make one out of four-and-twenty unhappy cosmopolitans 'intent upon dining,' but bewildered by a Babel of noises, an army of waiters, and a Brobdignagian pile of dishes. The Romans more wisely decreed that the number should not be less than the Graces, or more than the Muses. Who has not heard of the Roman gentleman that apologized to a friend for not inviting him to dinner, because his *number* was complete? There was a proverb in vogue which limited that number to seven:—

'Septem convivium, novem convivium facere.'

But we should not murmur if a liberal Amphitryon invited us to make the twelfth at his 'well-spread board.'

Talking of dinners necessarily brings us to the question of the dining hour. Fashion, in this respect, has exhibited the most astounding vagaries. In the reign of Francis I., the polite French were wont to say—

'Lever à cinq, dîner à neuf; —
Souper à cinq, coucher à neuf;
Fait vivre d'ans nemants et neurt.'

Froissart speaks of waiting upon the Duke of Lancaster at five o'clock

in the afternoon, after he had *supped*. If our ancestors dined at nine in the morning, when did they breakfast? When did they get up? They were early risers, undoubtedly; nor would they have accomplished such surprising exploits had they not begun to work and think with the first dawn of the day. For some centuries the dinner-hour was fixed at ten, and the supper at six, and the later hours now in vogue did not prevail in England until after the Restoration.

Fashion has improved upon the past, however, in the matter of drinking. There are, happily, few three-bottle-men now-a-days, and no gentleman considers it a necessary condition of his hospitality to make his guests so drunk that they cannot walk home. The beauty and usefulness of temperance are now very generally recognized. Society would be scandalized if the great Whig leader or the accomplished Conservative guerilla-chief rolled into the House of Commons 'flustered with wine'—seething, like Pitt and Fox, with a couple of bottles of port. Hard drinking is no longer one of our national vices, as it remained from our early wars in the Netherlands until the conclusion of our late war with France. Fashion, influenced by good sense, has waved her wand, and the swine have ceased to wallow 'in Epicurus' sty.'

A treatise might be written upon our ancient drinking customs. What wine-bibbers and beer-bibbers were the Elizabethan swash-bucklers, and the Stuart cavaliers! No thin potations; no half-filled cups for them! In those days he was nobody that could not 'drink *superoragulum*;' 'carouse the hunter's hoope;' or 'quaff upse freeze crosse.' The satirist Nash gives a curious picture of society in the thirsty Tudor days. He delineates eight different kinds of drunkards, and each must have been sufficiently common to enable him so accurately to detect and describe their humours. 'The first,' he says, 'is Ape-drunk, and he leaps and sings, and hollows and dances for the heavens; the second is Lyon-drunk, and he flings the pots about the house, breaks the glass windows

with his dagger, and is apt to quarrel with any man that speaks to him; the third is Swine-drunk, heavy, lumpish, and sleepy, and cries for a little more drink, and a few more clothes; the fourth is Sheep-drunk, wise in his own conceit when he cannot bring forth a right word; the fifth is Mandlin-drunk, when a fellow will weep for kindness in the midst of his drink, and kiss you, saying, "By God, captain, I love thee; go thy ways, thou dost not think so often of me as I do of thee: I would (if it pleased God) I could not love thee as I do;" and then he puts his finger in his eye and cries. The sixth is Martin-drunk, when a man is drunk, and drinks himself sober ere he stir; the seventh is Goat-drunk, when in his drunkenness he had no mind but on lechery. The eighth is Fox-drunk, when he is crafty drunk, as many of the Dutchmen be, which will never bargain but when they are drunk. All these species, and more, I have seen practised in one company at one sitting; when I have been permitted to remain sober amongst them only to note their several humours.'

To drink *super-ragulum*, that is, on the rail, is thus explained by Nash: 'After a man has turned up the bottom of his cup, a drop was allowed to settle on the thumb-nail. If more than a drop trickled down, the drinker was compelled to drink again by way of penance.'

Provocatives of drink were freely relished by our roystering, hard-drinking cavaliers. These were called 'shoeing-horns,' 'whetters,' 'drawers-on,' and 'pullers-on.' Massinger puts forth a curious list, whose perusal will induce the reader to be thankful for Fashion's changes:—

'I usher

Such an unexpected dainty bit for breakfast
As never yet I cook'd; 'tis not botargo,
Fried frogs, potatoes marrow'd, cavear,
Carpe's tongues, the pith of an English chine of
beef,

Nor our Italian, delicate wild mushrooms,
And yet a drawer on too; and if you show not
An appetite, and a strong one, I'll not say
To eat it, but devour it, without grace too,
(For it will not stay a preface), I am sham'd,
And all my past provocatives will be jeer'd at.'

Ben Jonson affords us some glimpses of the drinking habits common to all classes. In the comedy of 'Bartholomew Fair' he makes Overdo say: 'Look into any angle of the town, the Streights, or the Bermudas, where the quarrelling lesson is read, and how do they entertain the time, but with bottle-ale and tobacco? The lecturer is o' one side, and his pupils o' the other; but the seconds are still bottle-ale and tobacco, for which the lecturer reads, and the novices pay. Thirty pound a week in bottle ale! forty in tobacco! and ten more in ale again! Then for a suit to drink in, so much, and, that being slaver'd, so much for another suit, and then a third suit, and a fourth suit! and still the bottle-ale slavereth, and the tobacco stinketh.'

After the Restoration England for a time abandoned herself to a national saturnalia, and men drank deeply, from the king to the lowest hind. The novels of Fielding and Smollett are full of pictures of wild debauchery and drunken extravagance. It was the same with the next generation; with the generation that looked upon George, Prince Regent, as the first gentleman in Europe; shameless profligacy and mad drunkenness were the reproach of every class. A three-bottle man was then a King in Israel! Statesmen drank deep at their political councils; soldiers drank deep in the mess-room; ladies drank in their boudoirs; gentlemen at their clubs and their dining-tables! The criminal on his way to Tyburn stopped to drink a parting glass. Hogarth, in his wonderful pictures, has held the mirror up to society; in his 'Gin Lane' and 'Beer Court,' as in his 'Marriage à la Mode,' has shown how general was the shame, how terrible the curse! Thank Heaven! it is not 'the fashion,' in this present year of grace, to bemuse one's self with drink. We love the cheerful 'glass,' but eschew the 'punchbowl' and the 'bottle.'

Hitherto we have dealt with English fashions chiefly. Before we quit the subject, it will be as well to glance at the customary food of other nations. We shall find that

man exercises his gastronomical powers upon an astonishing variety of subjects. Not many of these should we be solicitous for Fashion to render popular in the British isles, notwithstanding the praiseworthy exertions and generous sacrifices of the members of the Acclimatization Society.

Let us suppose that some philanthropic gourmands—some adventurous Brown, Jones, and Robinson—are going on a tour of culinary discovery. First, then, they may dine with the Esquimaux in a field of ice, and be treated to tallow candles as a particularly delicious dish, with a slice of seal by way of something solid. Or they will find their plates loaded with the liver of the walrus—which, by the way, an American savant has commended in enthusiastic terms. They may vary their dinner by helping themselves to a lump of whale-meat, red and coarse and rancid, but very toothsome to an Esquimaux notwithstanding!

If they sat down at a Greenland's table, they would find it loaded with, or, to use the fashionable expression, 'groaning under' a dish of 'half-putrid whale's tail,' which has been lauded as a savoury matter, not dissimilar in flavour to cream cheese! Walrus' tongue is also a dainty, and the liver of porpoise makes a Greenland's mouth water. They may finish their repast with a slice of reindeer or a roasted rat, and drink to their host's health in a bumper of train oil.

If their fastidious taste will not allow them to rest content with these varieties of Arctic fare, they may go further and fare worse. In South America, for instance, Fashion recognises a notable *plat* in the tongue of the sea-lion. 'We cut off,' says a curious traveller, 'the tip of the tongue hanging out of the mouth of the sea-lion just killed. About sixteen or eighteen of us ate each a pretty large piece, and we all thought it so good that we regretted that we could not eat more of it.' We remember to have read in an American magazine that, in Honduras, the tail of the manatu, or sea-cow, is a staple dish for the

table, though new settlers cannot at first overcome its striking resemblance to man. The female has hands, and holds its young up to its breast precisely as a human mother would. We fear, therefore, that manatu would be objected to by Brown, Jones, and Robinson.

Let them visit China, then, where fashion and the cooks have invented some extraordinary dishes. Among these a foremost place must be given to soup compounded from sharks' fins so that they import every year from India twelve to fifteen thousand hundredweight of them. Off Kurrachee, near Bombay, about forty thousand sharks are annually offered up to John Chinaman's eccentric appetite. Then the rat! Why, game is not half so religiously preserved in England, nor is venison nearly so much esteemed. Birds' nests, too, supply the materials of a very fashionable soup. Those made use of are the nests of the *Hirundo esculenta*. The gathering of these nests, which are procured from caves on the southerly seacoast of Java, takes place three times in a year—in the end of April, the middle of August, and in December. 'They are composed of a mucilaginous substance, but as yet they have never been analysed with sufficient accuracy to show the constituents. Externally, they resemble ill-cooked, fibrous isinglass, and are of a white colour, inclining to red. Their thickness is little more than that of a silver spoon, and the weight from a quarter to half an ounce. When dry they are brittle and wrinkled; the size is nearly that of a goose's egg. Those that are dry, white, and clean, are the most valuable. They are packed in bundles, with split rattans run through to preserve the shape. Those procured after the young are fledged, are not saleable in China.

After the nests are obtained, they are separated from feathers and dirt, are carefully dried and packed, and are then fit for the market. The Chinese, who are the only people that purchase them for their own use, bring them in junks to this market, where they command extravagant prices; the best, or white

kind, often being worth four thousand dollars per picul (a Chinese weight, equal to 133½ lb. avoirdupoise), which is nearly twice their weight in silver. The middling kind is worth from twelve to eighteen hundred, and the worst, or those procured after fledging, one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars per picul. The labour bestowed to render the birds' nest fit for table is enormous; every feather, stick, or impurity of any kind is carefully removed; and then, after undergoing many washings and preparations, it is made into a soft, delicious jelly.'

John Chinaman has a *penchant* for dogs, and fattens them as the Berkshire farmer fattens pigs. This predilection is also shared by the ladies and gentlemen of Zanzibar, in Africa, the aristocracy of the Sandwich Islands, and the half-mannish, half-brutish aborigines of Australia. Brown, Jones, and Robinson—in Canton—may go to the butcher's shop, and order 'a fine leg of young dog,' just as Mrs. Tomkins orders her 'leg of lamb' at her butcher's in Camberwell. A traveller who has visited the Sandwich Islands asserts that, at a house or hut where on one occasion he dined, near every place at table was a plump young dog; and its flesh was so much relished by his liberal palate, that he speaks of it as combining the peculiar excellences of lamb and pork. These Sandwich dogs are fed with peculiar nicety, and are considered fit for market when two years old. The mode in which they are cooked is somewhat peculiar. A hole is dug in the ground large enough to contain the puppy. A good fire is built up in this hole, and large stones cast into it to remain until red hot. You then pile these red-hot stones about the sides and bottom, throw in leaves of odorous plants, and lay the dog, well cleaned and carefully prepared, upon the glowing stones. More leaves, more stones, and, finally, some earth are heaped upon the smoking dainty, until the oven becomes, as it were, hermetically sealed. The meat, when done, is full of delicious juices, and worthy

of a place at the Lord Mayor's table on the 9th of November.

Fashion, in Siam, prescribes a curry of ants' eggs as necessary at every well-ordered banquet. They are not larger—the eggs—than grains of pepper, and to an unaccustomed palate have no particular flavour. Besides being curried, they are brought to table rolled in green leaves, mingled with shreds or very fine slices of fat pork.

The Mexicans, a people dear to Napoleon III., make a species of bread of the eggs of insects; hemipterous insects which frequent the fresh waters of the Mexican lagunes. The natives cultivate, in the lagune of Chalco, a sort of *carex* called *touté*, on which the insects deposit their eggs very freely. This *carex* is made into bundles, which are removed to the Lake Texcuco, and floated in the water until covered with eggs. The bundles are then taken up, dried, and beaten over a large cloth. The eggs being thus disengaged, are cleaned, sifted, and pounded into flour.

Penguins' eggs, cormorants' eggs, gulls' eggs, albatrosses' eggs, turtles' eggs—all are made subservient to man's culinary experiments. Turtles' eggs are of the same size as pigeons' eggs. The mother turtle deposits them at night—about one hundred at a time—in the dry sand, and leaves them to be hatched by the genial sun. The Indian tribes who dwell upon the palmy banks of the Orinoco, procure from them a sweet and limpid oil, which is their substitute for butter. Lizards' eggs are regarded as a *bonne bouche* in some of the South Sea Islands: and the eggs of the *guana*, a species of lizard, are much favoured by West Indians. Alligators' eggs, too, are eaten in the Antilles, and resemble hen's eggs, it is said, in size and shape. Infinite is the variety of edibles discovered by necessity, and sanctioned by fashion!

An attempt was made, a few years ago, to introduce into France the practice of 'hippophagy,' but Fashion did not take kindly to horse-flesh. M. Isidore St. Hilaire, however, grew enthusiastic in his advocacy of the new viand. 'Horse-

flesh,' he exclaimed, 'has long been regarded as of a sweetish disagreeable taste, very tough, and not to be eaten without difficulty. But so many different facts are opposed to this prejudice, that it is impossible not to perceive the slightness of its foundation. The free or wild horse is hunted as game in all parts of the world where it exists—Asia, Africa, and America—and, perhaps, even now, in Europe. The domestic horse itself is made use of as alimentary as well as auxiliary—in some cases altogether alimentary—in Africa, America, Asia, and in some parts of Europe.

'Its flesh is relished by people the most different in their manner of life, and of races the most diverse, negro, Mongol, Malay, American, Caucasian. It was much esteemed up to the eighth century among the ancestors of some of the greatest nations of Western Europe, who had it in general use, and gave it up with regret. Soldiers to whom it has been served out, and people in towns who have purchased it in markets, have frequently taken it for beef. Still more often, and indeed habitually, it has been sold in restaurants, even in the best, as venison (!), and without the customers ever suspecting the fraud or complaining of it.' Let our readers take warning by this revelation, and never call for venison at a Parisian restaurant.

Insects, in many parts of the world, supply esteemed dishes. Thus, locusts are eaten by several tribes of North American Indians; the Bushmen of Africa indulge in roasted spiders; maggots tickle the palates of the Australian aborigines; and the Chinese feast upon the chrysalis of the silkworm.

The inhabitants of the Philippines indulge in frogs as a peculiarly edible delicacy. After the rains, says a traveller, they are taken from the ditch that encompasses the walls of Manilla, in great numbers, for they are then fat, in good condition for eating, and make an admirable curry. The French are still a frog-eating people. Mr. Frank Buckland, in his amusing 'Curiosities of Natural History,' observes:—

'In France, frogs are considered a luxury, as any *bon vivant* ordering a dish of them at the Trois Frères, at Paris, may, by the long price, speedily ascertain. Not wishing to try such an expensive experiment in gastronomy, I went to the large market in the Faubourg St. Germain, and inquired for frogs. I was referred to a stately-looking dame at a fish-stall, who produced a box nearly full of them, huddling and crawling about, and occasionally croaking as though aware of the fate to which they were destined. The price fixed was two a penny, and having ordered a dish to be prepared, the Dame de la Halle dived her hand in among them, and having secured her victim by the hind legs, she severed him in twain with a sharp knife; the legs, minus skin, still struggling, were placed on a dish; and the head, with the fore-legs affixed, retained life and motion, and performed such motions that the operation became painful to look at. These legs were afterwards cooked at the restaurateur's, being served up fried in bread-crumbs, as larks are in England; and most excellent eating they were, tasting more like the delicate flesh of the rabbit than anything else I can think of. I

afterwards tried a dish of the common English frog, but his flesh is not so white nor so tender as that of his French brother.'

The vagaries of fashion have not as yet introduced frogs into our English bills of fare, and, as far as our own taste is concerned, we trust no such innovation will be attempted. But if ever frogs should figure on our tables, it is some consolation to reflect that our cooks will prevent them from tasting like frogs,—they will so spice, and flavour, and combine, and dilute the dish. As Sam Slick says,—
'Veal to be good, must look like anything else but veal. You mustn't know it when you see it, or it's vulgar; mutton must be incog., too; beef must have a mask on; any thin' that looks solid, take a spoon to; any thin' that looks light, cut with a knife; if a thing looks like fish, you take your oath it is flesh; and if it seems real flesh, it's only disguised, for it's sure to be fish; nothin' must be nateral—natur is out of fashion here. This is a manufacturin' country; everything is done by machinery, and *that* that aint, must be made to look like it; and I must say, the dinner machinery is perfect.'





From a Photograph by John and Charles Watkins.]

THE RIGHT HON. SIR JAMES P. WILDE,
THE JUDGE OF THE DIVORCE COURT.

SKETCHES OF THE ENGLISH BENCH AND BAR.

IV.

Sir James Wilde,

THE JUDGE OF THE DIVORCE COURT.

THE ladies would never forgive us if we were to forget Sir James Wilde, the judge of the Divorce Court. And perhaps we could scarcely begin our sketch of him better than by giving a little story of him, told by a lady; and which is in itself a very good sketch of his character and manners. A lady—the wife of a Queen's Counsel and a Member of Parliament—(who told the writer the story) met at dinner a gentleman whose name she did not happen to hear and whom she did not know. She sat next to him, and found him a delightful companion. He was young looking, and hardly seemed one who could be called even middle-aged. He had fine dark eyes—good, regular features—a keen, yet kindly expression of countenance; spoke in a quiet, agreeable tone of voice—was rather lively in conversation—was evidently accustomed to society, had rather the tone and aspect of a man of fashion, and spoke freely on lighter topics, such as ladies are likely to be familiar with—the latest novel or the last new opera. ‘How did you like your companion, my dear?’ asked her husband, later in the evening. ‘Oh! he is delightful—who is he?’ ‘He is Sir James Wilde,’ answered the gentleman. ‘What!’ cried she, ‘the judge of the Divorce Court!’ Well, my dear, I had *no idea he was a lawyer!*’ The fact is, he was so pleasant and agreeable a man, so at home among the lighter topics of the day, and with so much the tone and air of a man of fashion, that she could not imagine him to be even a lawyer, still less a judge, and judge of that court which, above all others, appears so fearful and so formidable to the female mind.

From this it will be manifest that Sir James Wilde is, as he ought to be, a man of the world; and a man of sense and intelligence; and a man of society, not less than—perhaps

we might say more than—he is a lawyer. For the peculiar nature of his judicial duties these are really more important qualities than mere knowledge of law. As a lawyer he is, to say the least, respectable, and fully of the average judicial standard; while in ability he is certainly above the average. There are few judges on the Bench more able than Sir James Wilde. He has not some of Sir Cresswell's great qualities, but has others perhaps better. He may not be so good a lawyer, and perhaps not quite so quick, so clear-headed, and so keen. But he is shrewd and sensible enough—full of sense and intelligence, and if not quite so *clear* he is not quite so *cold*. He is not *ice*, as Sir Cresswell was. He has not that cold, calm countenance, that seemed to freeze you with its cool, chilling glance of those clear blue eyes. Sir James has a face warmer and more alive to human sympathies and passion. It is a face which reveals feeling as well as sense, shrewdness, and intelligence. It is not so cold and so hard as Sir Cresswell's; there is a fulness and brightness in the fine, dark hazel eyes, quite attractive.

The voice, too, has a fine, mellow, kindly tone in it, utterly unlike the thin, clear, cold, hard tones of Sir Cresswell. You would say at once that the man had ‘more of the milk of human kindness in him.’ He has not been soured, as Sir Cresswell they say had been, in early life, by disappointed affection, the bitterness of which had turned to cynicism. Sir James, on the contrary, has gone through life, socially as well as professionally, with happiness. Marriage has made his fortune, and matrimony gives him fame. He married a daughter of the Earl of Radnor, a lady of the great Whig house of Bouverie; and that (with his reputation for ability) got him

the judgship of the Divorce Court; and thus having made his own fortune (and, let us hope, her happiness) by a good marriage, he passes his time pleasantly in determining upon the follies, or the woes, or the miseries of those who have not married so happily.

As a judge he is very much liked. He is calm and clear-headed, and sufficiently quick and sensible, while he is not so sharp and snappish as Sir Cresswell was. He is a perfect gentleman and a most amiable and agreeable man. He is patient and attentive, candid and considerate, and if he ever errs, it is rather on the side of lenity and forbearance than of over severity. He is disposed to take as lenient a view as possible of matrimonial naughtinesses and a very sympathising view of matrimonial miseries. In a man who has himself married happily this is natural and amiable. He *has* erred; and erred seriously, for instance, as most men believe, in the case of Mrs. Codrington, in taking an unfavourable view of her case; and in poor Mrs. Chetwynd's case, in not allowing her to have her children. But however he may err, you see that he does his best to do right; and there is so much evident anxiety to do so, that, whatever his errors, one cannot be angry. He expresses himself on all occasions with exquisite propriety: his diction is admirable; his delivery quiet and unaffected, but with much subdued earnestness—sometimes eloquence—a great contrast to the coldness of Sir Cresswell. If he is not so acute a judge as Cresswell, he is one far more amiable, and when he is a few years older he will be fully as good and as great a judge. He has a larger mind than Cresswell, one far more comprehensive and philosophical. He does not take so cold and hard a view of human life, especially as regards the matrimonial relation; but for that very reason there is reason to believe that he will, at all events, when his mind has become opened and matured by experience, take a sounder view of it than his great predecessor. Sir Cresswell had been disappointed and soured in early life, in the very

matter of marriage, and that gave a cynical turn to his mind, particularly on that very subject. He has been happily described in a poetical portraiture, in these lines:

* With brain as clear as crystal, and with manner
As cold and chilling—Cresswell seemed to stand
In isolation from his fellow men.*

Then the poet asks—

* Was his temper
So from the first? Nay; but his life was
soured
By one keen disappointment of the soul,
Which turned his days to bitterness.*

The poet proceeds to tell the story of Sir Cresswell's blighted hopes, and he tells it beautifully.

* The story
Is commonplace; but not less true—of love,
And pride that overmastered that strong love.
And a stolen flight, and then a desolate hearth,
And an overwhelming sorrow and distrust;
And so his life thenceforward was a desert.
Yet let his name be honoured. All forgotten
That sharp sarcastic tone and curl of lip,
And scornful eye—that seldom smote but when
Pert folly called them forth; for Truth and
Justice
[Arrayed in Learning's grand imperial robe,
Were ever by his side upon the bench,
Guiding his judgment when he spake the law.*

Now Sir James Wilde has all his predecessor's judicial excellencies and good qualities, except the great judicial experience which Sir Cresswell had already had before he came to the Divorce Court; and except, also, the extraordinary acuteness which distinguished him; to counterbalance which, Sir James is free from the one great defect of Sir Cresswell, his soured and cynical spirit; and, moreover, as he has greater warmth of nature, so he has greater breadth of mind, and, as we have said, in a few years he will probably be found as sound, and perhaps a greater judge than Cresswell. He has had nothing certainly to sour his nature. His own happy and auspicious marriage has rather, as already observed, tended to give him that warm sympathy with the matrimonial relation which the judge of the Divorce and Matrimonial Court ought surely to possess. Already on more than one point his opinion has been deemed by the profession sounder

than Sir Cresswell's. The fact is, Sir Cresswell's mind though acute was narrow. The magnificent address delivered by Sir James Wilde at York alone would suffice to show him a man of enlarged and philosophical mind. Sir Cresswell could no more have delivered such an address than he could have flown. And very likely he would have sneered at the man who delivered it. His mind was cramped as well as soured by the cold, cynical spirit which possessed it. Were he alive he probably would have joined with those who sneered at some of Sir James Wilde's judgments as 'weak' and 'sentimental,' because he betrayed a belief in the possibility of reconciliation and reunion between married couples who had quarrelled. But the experience of future years will perhaps prove that Sir James was right after all; and the probability certainly is in his favour; for he is a married man, and has actual experience in the matrimonial life, whereas poor Sir Cresswell never knew it, and looked at it only through the distorting medium of a soured and disappointed spirit. Sir James Wilde is, as the judge of the Divorce Court should be, a married man: and a man happily married, and one who has practical experience of matrimony. Partly from this cause, he goes far more largely into society, especially female society, than a judge who is unmarried possibly can; and he knows infinitely more of the inner life of married people, the aspect of domestic life, the character of women, the causes which make or mar their happiness; the sources of disagreement or dislikes; the trumpery causes which sometimes lead to dissension and separation; the tendency of former affection to revive and yearn for its original object. All these, and a hundred other things, Sir James, going largely into society with his wife, must learn, and hear, and observe; of which poor Sir Cresswell, in his miserable isolation, must have been ignorant. Sir Cresswell knew 'the world,' no doubt, in a certain sense; but it was a hard, cold world—the world which lawyers see, not the inner world of

married life, and the sacred circle of home, with all its domestic cares, and joys, and duties. To all this he was a stranger; yet for a judge of the Divorce and Matrimonial Court, this was the most important knowledge of all, as enabling him to enter into and understand the disputes of married people and the chances of their reunion. Happier than his predecessor, Sir James Wilde has this knowledge in its fulness, and therefore he is, we think, a better judge of that Court.

He admirably upholds the decorum and dignity of the Court, and has a perfect control over the Bar there, and this without anything severe, snappish, or sarcastic; but simply as himself preserving on all occasions a perfect air of self-possession, calm, gentlemanly good-breeding, and a quiet dignity of tone and manner, which commands the entire respect of the Bar, especially as it is blended with the most thorough amiability and constant courtesy. On the whole Sir James Wilde is an admirable judge of the Court over which he presides, and it is a pleasure to see him sitting there.

The following passage may be taken as a good specimen of Sir James Wilde's judicial style, his justness of thought, his purity of diction, and his felicity of expression—

'The shape or form that the petitioner's misconduct in married life may take, its degree, the length of its duration, its incidents of mitigation or of aggravation, its causes and effects—all these have, or may have, a bearing on the petitioner's claim to relief, and yet are capable of such infinite variety and intensity that they escape a distinct expression, refuse to be fixed in a positive and distinct enactment. The duty of weighing these matters has therefore been cast upon the Court; and when the cases arising have been sufficiently numerous to unfold any rules of general applications, this Court may be enabled to guide itself and others, in these more narrow limits, by further definition. But until then the same reasons which have served to make the legislature express itself with latitude,

ought to make the Court cautious in restricting itself by precedent.'

Or, again, take the following—a masterly definition of the term 'desertion,' as applied to the matrimonial relation. We make no apology for introducing these extracts, because they are not only happy illustrations of judicial style, but also on a subject of great interest to our fair readers.

'It is not easy to define "desertion." To desert is to "forsake" or "abandon." But what degree or extent of withdrawal from the wife's society constitutes a forsaking or abandoning her? This is easily answered in some cases, not so easily in others; for the degree of intercourse which married persons are able to maintain with each other is various. It depends on their walk in life, and is not a little at the mercy of external circumstances. The position of some, and, indeed, the large majority, admits of that intimate cohabitation which completely fulfils the ends of matrimony. Short of that, all degrees of matrimonial intercourse present themselves in the world. To some, it is given to meet only at intervals, though of frequent occurrence. It is the lot of others to be separated for years, or to meet only under great restrictions. The fetters imposed by the profession of the army and navy, the requirements of commercial enterprise, and the call to foreign lands which so frequently attend all branches of industrial life, make these restrictions often inevitable. But perhaps in no class do they fall so heavily as on those who devote themselves to domestic service for the means of life. *And yet matrimony is made for all; and matrimonial intercourse must accommodate itself to the weightier considerations of material life.* From these considerations it is obvious that the test of finding a home for the wife, and living with her, is not universally applicable in pronouncing "desertion" by the husband. Nor does any other criterion, suitable to all cases, present itself to the mind of the wife. To neglect opportunities of consorting with a wife is not necessarily to desert her. Indif-

ference, want of proper solicitude, illiberality, denial of reasonable means, and even faithlessness, is not desertion. Desertion seems pointed at a breaking off, more or less completely, of the intercourse which previously existed. Is the husband then bound to avail himself of all means at his disposal for increasing the intimacy of this intercourse on the peril of being pronounced guilty of desertion? On the other hand, is he free from that peril so long as he maintains any intercourse at all? The former proposition is easily solved in the negative. It may be doubted whether the latter ought not to be answered in the affirmative. But it is enough for the decision of this case. So long as a husband treats his wife as a wife, by maintaining such degree and manner of intercourse as might naturally be expected from a husband of his calling and means, he cannot be said to have deserted her.'

Nothing, it will be seen, could be more sensible, more philosophical, or more true. Our readers may easily recognise the good sense of a man of the world, the enlightened ideas of a philosophical mind, and the calm reflective spirit of a judicial temperament, with the happiest, most pointed, and most expressive judicial style. One more illustration for the sake of our fair readers. It was in a very painful and unhappy case in which the wife had sinned, but sought forgiveness in such a humble and contrite spirit that she won the judge's sympathy, though she failed to touch the heart of her husband.

'The burthen of the husband's letters seems to be as follows. I still love you and long for your love. I will summon you to rejoin me on one condition—that of true religious repentance. Go to my sister in England; she will help you to repent. You have never loved me, and are ungrateful for my past leniency. The tone of these letters is that of very stern reproach mixed with much religious exhortation equally stern. Mere penitence will not suffice: his wife is to "abhor herself in dust and ashes;" she is to undergo deep

humiliation and self-abasement before her repentance can be real. But there is a strong yearning for her affection, and in the earlier letters an evident wish to satisfy himself that he might take her back with safety. On the side of the wife the letters may be thus epitomized. "I will not pretend to an amount of religious feeling which I do not entertain. I can never sympathise with what I consider the extreme views of yourself and your sister in matters of religion. Still I am truly sorry: I am but a sinful, wicked woman, but I do sincerely repent of past misconduct; pray take me back to live with you; I feel more true longing for your society than ever; but I make no pretences. You must take me, if at all, as a wicked, sinful woman, who will try hard to be all you wish, and who earnestly repents conduct which she now sees in its true light." Complete submission, absolute prostration before her husband's will, and tender entreaty on one side; reiterated reproaches, bitter words, an austere and uncompromising censure on the other, with a vast amount of religious allusion on both sides—these are the principal features of this most distressing correspondence. It comes to a cruel end. For six or seven months had the hope of being received again been held before the eyes of the wife. The husband wrote letters which, interpreted by himself, actually offered her the option of return to his home. She misunderstood them, and waited for a more sure welcome. Then came the final blow to all for which the wife had yearned—an explicit withdrawal of all that had been held out to her.

Then, after a masterly analysis of the evidence, leading to the conclusion that it was a case of suspicion, not of conclusive guilt, the judge proceeded to declare the husband's petition dismissed, and concluded in a passage which was made the subject of much severe comment at the time, and is as good a specimen as could be given of his mental calibre and his judicial character.

'My mind comes to the conclu-

sion of much levity, actual misconduct, but no downright guilt. It is impossible not to feel the deepest interest in the future fate of this unhappy couple. If the petitioner is disappointed at the end arrived at, he will bear in mind that, while human judgment is always fallible, he has no cause to quarrel with the means. The case has been most carefully sifted, and with the most earnest attention of all who had it in hand. And the thought is not without some solace that human judgment, impartially applied, has absolved his wife and confirmed his own early conclusions. Thus fortified, he may safely take her back to his home. No one can read the entire submission and pitiful appeal of his wife without indulging the conviction that the future will not be with her as the past. She owes all to his generosity and forbearance; and she will not disgrace that which does him so much honour. May it be so; and should the day come when peace and mutual confidence shall be established between himself and the mother of his only child, haply he may not regret that it has not been permitted to this court to undo the most solemn and most sacred act of his life. *Forsitán et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*'

That is, in plain English, in that event he will ever look back with pleasure to the result of proceedings which at the time were so painful. Those who censured this celebrated judgment did not do it justice, and forgot that the gist of it was that the husband himself had originally been disposed to look over what had passed, and to receive his wife back, and that it was the influence of third parties which had interposed to prevent his carrying out this resolve, which the judge, after careful consideration, considered to have been right. And as he perhaps charitably arrived at the conclusion that there had been no actual guilt, why should the husband *not* take her back? and if so, why should they not, hereafter, recal the result of these painful proceedings with grateful pleasure, seeing that it had restored them to each other? Those, then, who

sneered at the judgment as 'sentimental' were, as sneerers usually are, shallow-minded and ignorant of the human heart. No doubt, not a sentence of the judgment could have been delivered by Sir Cresswell; and it proceeded from a very different mind and nature; and for that very reason we have quoted it as eminently characteristic of his successor, Sir James Wilde. And unless a cold, severe, and cynical nature is a proof of infallible wisdom; and unless human judgments are necessarily to be less merciful and charitable than divine, who shall say that Sir James is the worse judge because he has the warmer sympathies for human nature, a kindlier feeling for its faults, a truer sense of its mixed character, and therefore a more enlarged and philosophical view of its real character, than a colder and a narrower mind would adopt? What verdict do our readers pronounce upon the present judge of the Divorce Court? Is he guilty of too much lenity because he has more sympathy? Is he necessarily weaker than his predecessor, or may it not be that in such matters he is wiser? If Sir Cresswell was the colder judge, may not Sir James be the better? We think our fair readers will decide in his favour.

MR. JUSTICE WILLES.

We associate Mr. Justice Willes with Sir James Wilde because, not long ago, when there was a rumour of the removal of Sir James to the post of Chief Baron of the Exchequer, it was also rumoured that Mr. Justice Willes was to succeed him in the Divorce Court; and because he alone, of all the common-law judges, at all resembles him in his judicial character, or would be likely or qualified to succeed him, which, indeed, may have been the ground of the rumour referred to. He may fitly enough therefore be associated with Sir James Wilde, and his fitness for the office it was supposed he was to fill may perhaps in some degree be estimated from our sketch of his judicial character.

A single glance at the countenance of Mr. Justice Willes will show you that he is a man of intellect, of calm and philosophic mind, and of great study and learning. It is a countenance somewhat of the same general class or character as that of Sir James Wilde; a regular oval face, finely-cut features, rather inclining to be sharp, a thoughtful, reflective aspect, a look at first rather of quiet reserve. There is this difference, however, that Sir James Wilde is dark, Mr. Justice Willes is fair and light. There is some resemblance, too, in general manner and demeanour—an air of quiet self-possession, an aspect calm, composed, and reflective; an inclination to be, if not taciturn, at all events sparing of words among strangers, and to speak with terseness and neatness of expression; and at the same time beneath an exterior of rather cold reserve, a great capacity for the enjoyment of general and refined society. As regards society, however, Sir James Wilde has probably gone much more into society than Mr. Justice Willes, who has led more the life of a student. These two words, society and study, mark as much as possible the great difference between the two men. Sir James Wilde is more a man of society, Mr. Justice Willes rather a man of study. The latter has read far more than the other, the former has seen and heard much more. The one is more an adept in learning, the other in real life. For this reason, probably, Mr. Justice Willes might not make, in some respects, so good a judge of the Divorce Court as Sir James Wilde, not having so much knowledge of life, of human nature, and of the world. Each, however, is characterised by a large and enlightened mind and a philosophic and reflective disposition. Perhaps a physiognomist would say, looking at their countenances, that Sir James Willes had the larger measure of intellect, the most acute and capacious mind, and certainly it has been most enriched, enlarged, and expanded by acquired learning.

There probably never was a judge who more rigidly practised the great gift of taciturnity than Sir James

Willes. He always was distinguished for it, and he sits in a court which is remarkable for it. There he sits by the side of the grave and solemn Byles; they are rare listeners, and seldom interrupt; but none is so taciturn as he is; and when he speaks it is sparingly and tersely, and often with a queer, quaint pointedness, which he rather affects. He seems to pride himself upon expressing the most pointed meaning in the shortest possible form of words, and, if possible, in a single word, which he often succeeds in doing. Thus, the other day, a young counsel had been rather copiously, dogmatically, and vehemently urging a certain view. When he had exhausted himself, the learned judge simply said in his quiet tone, 'I concur.' This is the formula used by judges to express their concurrence with each other, and it was adopted evidently to convey, in a delicate manner, a slight touch of satire on the dogmatic tone taken by the young counsel, who at once saw and enjoyed the satire.

On another occasion, when a counsel, in the heat of argument, made a statement obviously exaggerated, 'Rhetoric,' said the learned judge, quietly, 'rhetoric.' It was enough. The learned judge is of a kindly disposition and a thorough gentleman, and when he has to convey a rebuke, he does it in some delicate and refined way like this. Thus once on circuit a young barrister, counsel for the prosecution in a criminal case, who was breaking down, feeling rather in a hobble, wished to get out of the difficulty by putting it on the judge, and said to him, 'I will throw myself upon your lordship's hands.' 'Mr. —,' said the learned judge, quietly, 'I decline the burden.' On another similar occasion the counsel asked if he should take such and such a course; to which the learned judge dryly replied, 'No one is allowed to ask questions of the judge except her Majesty and the House of Lords.' On some occasions the scholastic, almost pedantic, turn of Sir James Willes' mind leads him, when he desires to be emphatic, into queer and quaint expressions, which sometimes appear

incongruous or have a humorous sound. Thus once in delivering an elaborate judgment, 'I hope,' he said, with emphasis, yet with his usual hesitating manner—'I hope that on all occasions I shall be valiant in upholding the powers of the court.' On another occasion, when a *dictum* obviously wrong was quoted from a *Nisi Prius* report, 'I am sure,' he said, 'the learned judge never said what the reporter has been' (hesitating as if for choice of an expressive phrase) '*malignant* enough to put into his mouth.' There is this dry, scholastic manner about the learned judge which sometimes has the aspect of pedantry, but is not so, and is only the result of much study. It is impossible to imagine a greater or more striking contrast than between Mr. Justice Willes and Mr. Justice Blackburn, or Mr. Baron Martin. He so quiet, so taciturn, so sparing of speech, and so studied in his words, they so voluble, so pliant, so vehement; he so fond of reflection, they of discussion and disputation. His whole judicial manner and character more nearly resembles those of Sir James Wilde than those of any other judge on the Bench; but his quaintnesses of expression are so peculiar to him that there is not another judge on the Bench who could possibly have uttered them, or to whom they would ever be ascribed. There is something extremely characteristic in those idiomatic phrases made use of by a man, especially if he be one of strong mind or peculiar character. They mark the man's mental traits or peculiarities as strikingly as the features of his physiognomy, and often much more so. They embody in a single word or phrase the whole idiosyncrasy of the man, and hit him off, so to speak, as a photograph does, in an instant.

There is something in the utterance and manner of Mr. Justice Willes exactly what you would imagine in a man not physically strong, with a voice somewhat weak and a constitution impaired by excessive study and enormous practice and severe intellectual labour; with a spirit greater than his strength; with a nature exceedingly

sensitive; with a mind scholastic and all but pedantic in its tone, and only redeemed from pedantry by the force of his intellect; with a taste extremely fastidious and refined; with a turn for taciturnity and terseness of expression; and with a singular mixture of modesty and self-sufficiency, the effect at once of consciousness of intellectual power and knowledge, and a constant sense of the beauty and propriety of humility.

The result of all these physical and mental traits is that he speaks at first in a nervous, hesitating kind of way, which, however, as his ideas flow forth freely from his well-cultured memory and richly-stored mind, and as his intellect feels its force and mastery of his subject, becomes more rapid, though still with a nervous kind of manner, and every now and then with a hesitation not the result of any delicacy of words, but of a fastidious choice of an expression, the choice being often, as already illustrated, exceedingly peculiar. The delivery is hurried and ineffective, and never loses its air of hesitancy; but his manner is so earnest and emphatic, and withal so calm and impassioned, so thoroughly intellectual in its tone, its correctness so obviously the result of much thought and study, deep reflection, and strong and clear conviction, that it always makes an impression: though far removed from oratory or eloquence, there is no man on the Bench who conveys so much earnestness with such perfect quietness, such strength and clearness of conviction without the least approach to vehemence. His style of speaking is the most purely intellectual of any judge on the common-law Bench, and, to revert again to our previous comparison, it reminds one more of Sir James Wilde than any other judge, except as to its nervous, hurried manner of delivery; for Sir James Wilde is firm and fluent: and though both alike are, as already observed, disposed to be terse in expression, he is more copious than Sir James Willes, whose style is somewhat more severe and restrained; and again,

Sir James Willes is far more formal in his style.

Sir James Willes's formality of manner and fondness for allusions to ancient learning sometimes add to the air of pedantry; but there is no man in reality more free from it. His learning is genuine, and there is no judge on the bench who so happily, in his mind, unites ancient wisdom with modern enlightenment, and blends the experience of the past with the philosophy of the present. He has gathered from the learning of past ages all its richest treasures, and he applies and improves them to the practical uses of the present time. It was this property of his mind which made his labours so valuable as a Common Law Commissioner in improving our system of civil procedure.

There is one trait in the judicial character of Mr. Justice Willes which will commend him to our fair readers and to all generous-minded men, and perhaps goes a great way to qualify him for the Divorce Court, and that is, a chivalrous feeling for woman, a deep sense of her worth, a warm sympathy for her trials, a kind indulgence for her failings, and a strong feeling of indignation at her wrongs. Let any man who has in any way behaved badly to a woman beware how he comes for trial before Sir James Willes, for it will go hardly with him. He is never more severe in his sentences than in such cases. He always 'leans to woman's side,' and if the case is doubtful, is disposed to give it against the man. He is 'to her faults a little blind, and to her virtues very kind.' He always remembers that she is the 'weaker vessel,' and that it is for man to protect her, not to wrong her or injure her; and if a man, in his opinion, has clearly behaved badly to a woman he will do his best to punish him for it; not, of course, by warping the law, he is far too conscientious and strict in his ideas of law to do that; but if there is no doubt as to the facts, and it is plain the woman has at all events been badly treated, it will go hardly with the man if he is tried before Sir James Willes.

He is always, in cases where women are the prosecutors, especially if young women or girls, exceedingly tender, considerate, and delicate in his tone towards them, and while perfectly just, he does his best for them; and this is so whether the matter be civil or criminal. In this he differs greatly from some other judges, whose tone towards women on such occasions shows that they don't believe in women, and that their disposition is against them. Very far otherwise is it with Sir James Willes. The inclination of some of his brethren is always to treat woman as the tempter; he is more disposed to regard her as the sufferer, and as falling a prey to the temptations of the stronger sex. His idea always is, that a man, being stronger, should protect a woman, if need be, even against herself, not betray her or ever take advantage of her fondness for him. Hence he is very much against the man in cases of seduction or breach of promise of marriage. 'If a man misleads and ruins a young woman,' he said once, on an occasion of this kind, 'he ought to be made to pay for it.' The jury took the hint and gave large damages. The words were few and simple, but they were

uttered with that nervous, hurried emphasis which perhaps betokens strong feeling as much as eloquence, and they had the same effect. So on another occasion, a most remarkable case of breach of promise of marriage, tried before Mr. Justice Willes, where the excuse was that the young man's mother did not like the girl. 'Gentlemen,' said the judge to the jury, 'if a man has promised to marry a young woman, *he ought to marry her.*' What could be more simple, and, to read, what might be supposed to be more tame? But these few simple words were uttered with all that peculiar air of suppressed feeling which is so characteristic of him, and they had an immense effect, as the verdict showed, for the jury gave 2500*l.* damages, one of the largest ever known. These instances may suffice to show that Sir James Willes has that sympathy for the fair sex which men of generous minds usually have, and which certainly that sex will consider, to say the least, no small qualification for the office of Judge of the Divorce Court, especially as it is controlled by a most severe and perfect sense of justice.



PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES.

CHAPTER X.

'BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER.'

SIX years ago, when Fate had graciously bestowed that white elephant Marian upon Mr. Sutton, he had made an earnest but fruitless attempt to arouse her interest on behalf of some members of his own family. His father and mother were dead, but his brothers and a sister were alive and in high health, and anything but corresponding circumstances. Mark had been, as has been seen, the successful one of the family. The rest had laid their respective talents up in a spirit of over-caution that had kept both excitement and wealth from their doors. They had all given vent to warning sounds, and been ready with fluent prognostications of evil things to come for him when Mark commenced the speculations that eventually floated him on to fortune. They had stood afar off from him, prophesying that he would go up like a rocket, perhaps, and down like its stick surely, and had generally been sententious and given to declaring that the paths their parents trod, and the lives their parents led, and the modest competencies their parents made, were good and great enough for them.

But when Mark succeeded—when he went up like the before-quoted rocket, and seemed very unlikely ever to come down again, they forgave him for having falsified their predictions, and affably borrowed money of him wherewith to increase their own businesses, and were altogether affectionate, and much imbued with the family mind towards him, as was fit and wise.

Mark Sutton being a plain, practical man, opposed unconsciously to vain expectations of people being nobler than they were, accepted the change in the fraternal sentiments towards himself, and seemed to consider them as the reasonable offspring of common sense and expediency. He knew that they had all thought him wrong in bygone

days. He knew that they had been wrong in thinking this, and he knew that they knew that he knew it. But he took his triumph meekly, and never reminded them of anything that they evidently wished to forget, and altogether conducted himself for awhile quite after the pattern of the ideal rich relation of romance.

His only sister had married a farmer and grazier of the name of Bowden—a man who was rich in flocks and herds, and who commanded a good market. He had died shortly before Mark Sutton's marriage with Miss Talbot, leaving his widow and four children (all girls) amply provided for, under a will of which Mark Sutton, who was also his nieces' guardian, was sole executor. Shortly after Bowden's death Mark Sutton married, and made that earnest attempt which has been chronicled to interest Marian in his relations—principally in Mrs. Bowden and her daughters. And Marian mutely refused to be interested, and Mark tacitly accepted her decision.

Still though his sister girded against him garrulously down in her own locality in the heart of a midland county, for letting his 'fine lady wife wean him from his own flesh and blood,' the management of her affairs continued in his hands, and her store increased. From time to time he borrowed money of her, money which was always quickly returned with heavy interest; and at length he persuaded her to let him speculate on her account, which she did, until at the date of the opening of this story the well-to-do widow had become a very wealthy one.

When Mr. Bowden died his eldest daughter, a sharp little girl of twelve, had been removed from school 'to be a comfort' to her mother. In sober truth, Mrs. Bowden stood in no special need of par-

ticular comfort at this juncture, for the deceased Mr. Bowden had never been much more than the breadwinner to her; and she was a woman blessed with a sound digestion, a good appetite, and an aptitude for finding consolation in solid comforts. But she was a decorous woman, one who never put herself up in the slightest degree against public opinion. So when the clergyman of the little country town where she lived told her 'she must live for her children now,' and two or three of her neighbours added that if they were in her place they 'would have Elly home; none could say how much better she would feel if she kept the dear child under her own eye'—when these things had been duly said, and enforced with the sighs and shakes of the head that are ordinarily and judiciously brought to bear on the bereaved, Mrs. Bowden took Elly home, and at once ceased to think of her object in doing so.

Her uncle and guardian agreed to the plan, thinking perhaps that he could do nothing else, since his wife had made it impossible for other than mere business relations to exist between his sister and himself. So without let or hindrance Miss Bowden came home from school, and grew up in the atmosphere of a country town—grew up just what might have been expected from her parentage, her wealth, and the liberty she enjoyed.

Now it happened that though Mark Sutton was much older in years, and far more experienced on the Stock Exchange than Edgar Talbot, that the latter had obtained a business ascendancy over his brother-in-law—an ascendancy of a marked and positive character—an ascendancy which Mr. Edgar Talbot did not hesitate to employ when it suited his purpose. It had suited his purpose lately to raise heavy sums of money from Mark Sutton, and additionally to make Mark a sort of partner in his ventures. What those ventures were need not be told here. It would be easy to introduce facts connected with the Stock Exchange—easy to employ technicalities in describing them—

easy to pad this story with any quantity of business matter, but I shall refrain from doing so. The high stakes for which Edgar Talbot was playing were a brilliant, unsailable social position, and a power of influencing divers governments through their treasuries. The alternations of his luck will be marked, but there is no need to describe each card as he plays it.

The last effort of this embryo Rothschild's mind over Mr. Sutton resulted in the latter attempting to negotiate a loan with his sister, Mrs. Bowden. He had every reason to suppose that she would accede willingly to his proposition. The fortune her husband had left had been more than doubled by her brother's judicious investments. But Mrs. Bowden was a cautious woman, and now that it had come to Mark wanting to borrow a very heavy sum of her, she suffered no sentiments of gratitude for the luck that had hitherto attended his speculations on her behalf to intervene, but resolved not to give him a favourable answer until she had seen him, learnt his views, understood his plans, and won through his wife an introduction into society for Miss Bowden.

London life—at least the London life led by Mr. and Mrs. Sutton—loomed largely in the atmosphere of that little country town where Mrs. Bowden lived. Partly through ignorance, and partly through pride, she overrated the position of Mark and his wife. In his quiet, unobtrusive way he had put Marian before his own people as a star of great magnitude; and so Mrs. Bowden, away out of reach of the crucible where Mrs. Sutton's pretensions could be tested, fell into error respecting her sister-in-law, and pictured her as one of the most brilliant, persistent, and powerful votaries of pleasure and fashion. It may be added that Mrs. Bowden's notions as to the career run by one of these favoured beings had been gathered from a diligent perusal of the novels of the silver fork school. What added pungency to the desire she had to introduce Elly to Mrs. Sutton, was the belief

she had that through that lady's influence Ellen would marry well—at any rate, be induced to forget an old friend who had grown up loving and loved by her.

So when Mark Sutton asked a good big favour of her, she determined to make the granting of it well worth her own while.

'Before I lend the money to you, I should like to have a conversation with you. It would be idle to seek to draw Mrs. Mark and you out of the gay vortex by inviting you here, so I shall take Elly up to London for a month, starting to-morrow, when we shall have opportunities of meeting.'

'Then she went on to give him her London address—a good family hotel in Piccadilly, for it was no part of her plan to force herself upon him at his house until he entreated her to come.

He had received this letter (only the housemaid who lighted the fire the following morning with the torn copies of it knew what it had cost Mrs. Bowden in the inditing) on the day that witnessed the Lyons' advent at Edgar Talbot's house. During the evening he had communicated the contents of it to Edgar, adding that he had said nothing about it yet to Marian, as she shrank from all association with his family.

'She must get over that falsely fine folly in this case,' her brother said, almost harshly; 'you must make Marian civil to your sister.' Then he took Mrs. Bowden's note and glanced over it again, sneering and laughing to himself at that phrase about the 'gay vortex,' and added, 'she comes up to-day, I see; you must make Marian call on her to-morrow.'

Somehow or other it hurt Mark Sutton to hear this tone used about his wife, even by her own brother. 'I will ask her to do it,' he answered, curtly.

'Ask her, and you know what she'll say, or at least what she will look if you "ask" her in that tone; you must make her do it, Mark.'

'That I cannot.'

'Then I can.'

Edgar Talbot spoke abruptly and

imperiously, and Mark Sutton had to fall back upon the old, ever-recurring situation of accepting what Edgar had spoken, in dread lest he should speak still worse things. It was always well within the bounds of probability that Marian might have been guilty of some act of folly with which her brother was acquainted, though her husband was not.

'If her regard for me' (Mark Sutton spoke in a very low, humble tone), 'If her regard for me prompts her to please me by calling on my sister, I shall be grateful to her; but I will not coerce her.'

He spoke so decidedly that Edgar Talbot said no more to him about the matter. But the following day—long before Mrs. Lyon had got herself and her scruples under weigh for the studio—Mr. Talbot had called on Mrs. Sutton, and made her see the propriety not so much of calling on Mrs. Bowden without delay, as of obliging him.

'You will be prepared to meet them then I hope, for I am sure I shall not know who else to ask,' she said, scornfully. To which he replied—

'Oh, nonsense! that sort of thing is all nonsense: women's minds are always running on the necessity for organizing dreary social gatherings. You need not ask me or any one else to meet them—only be civil to them.'

'How?'

'That I leave to you,' he replied, rising up to go away. 'I only tell you to lose no time about it.'

So it came to pass that Mrs. Sutton, instead of going to the studio, went to call on her husband's sister.

It was as about as distasteful an employment as could possibly have been conceived for her by her worst enemy. The widow was far from being the most terrible part of the trial to Marian. Mrs. Bowden was a happy, hearty, large, buxom woman, who made a merit of and revelled in her lack of refinement. She was honest, outspoken, healthy, and aggressively high-spirited and hilarious. There was a touch of sly humour in the way she made manifest her perfect understanding

of the causes which had brought Mrs. Mark to call upon her at last; and Marian recognised this touch and appreciated it as a species of cunning insight into other people's feelings that was twin to her own. Moreover, for herself, Mrs. Bowden wanted nothing of the fair, selfish lady, whose power of giving was gained entirely from Mrs. Bowden's brother. A course of shopping, methodical and unceasing during the week, and a course of musical services at one of the churches most celebrated for its choir on Sundays, was all Mrs. Bowden desired for herself in the way of metropolitan gaiety. But she asked for more than these things for her daughter.

The girl was standing by the window when Mrs. Bowden came into the room, looking out upon the ceaseless stir and excitement in which she had no share, and half wishing herself at home again, where every spot had its interest, and every hour its occupation for her. She looked out upon a butcher's shop, a publishing office, and a cab-stand. There was nothing visible of the glory and grandeur, of the beauty and fashion of which she had heard and read. The high street of their own little country town could show them brighter and more seductive shop windows than any she could see from her post of observation in this excellent family hotel. Overladen omnibuses—they seemed overladen to her—horribly-horsed cabs, and long lines of earnest, anxious-looking pedestrians! The heart of the country girl sank down as she looked out on these things, and felt despondently that she had nothing brighter before her for a month. As this conviction smote her, 'Mrs. Sutton' was announced, and she turned and acknowledged that something brighter was before her already.

Marian has been already described. Picture her now as she came in with a bright, light, rose tint on her cheeks, the effect of the winter air and of annoyance that was hardly subdued. She looked pretty, graceful, smooth. There was a promise about her appearance

of those better things which Miss Bowden had vaguely expected to find in London. She welcomed them, and made manifest her sense of the relationship that existed between them in a few simple words that seemed to Elly Bowden the perfection of sound. Mrs. Sutton was neither too warm nor too cool to them. She had, in truth, made a little study of the manner it would be advisable to bring to bear upon them, and she was perfect in her part, hard as it was for her to play to such an audience.

To the girl who turned from the window to meet her, Mrs. Sutton took a contemptuous dislike at once. Theoretically she had always despised the Bowdens, and held aloof from them, as has been seen, and now at sight of them she declared to herself that her theory was justified. There was no appeal against that decision, no softening influence in the mother's evident pleasure, and the girl's evident gratitude to her for having come at all. She contrasted Miss Bowden's healthy, mottled, plump cheeks with her own little, delicate, fair face; and when the girl put a great, hearty, rather red hand out to her, Mrs. Sutton had strong need to remember all her brother's injunctions before she could bring herself to touch it with cordiality.

'I bring a message from Mark; he will give me an hour here alone to get acquainted with you, and then he will call for me,' she said, turning to the beaming Mrs. Bowden, who forgave the estrangement at once, after a generous fashion that Marian would have thought utterly incompatible with her sister-in-law's manner and provincialisms, had she given herself to the consideration of such trifling causes and effects. And then Mrs. Bowden, after declaring that she 'should be glad to see her brother at any time,' grew affectionately communicative to his herald, until Mrs. Sutton had to strengthen herself by the reflection that an hour is only sixty minutes, and that 'everything must come to an end.'

By-and-by Mrs. Bowden made an excuse for banishing her daughter

for a while, in order that she might discuss some of her own hopes concerning Ellen and Ellen's character with the new relative, about whose magically refining touch Mrs. Bowden permitted herself to be very hopeful.

'Is that your eldest daughter?' Mrs. Sutton inquired, as Miss Bowden went away from the room, reluctantly, in obedience to the maternal behest, to search for something that she had grave doubts as to her mother having brought with her, and no doubt at all as to her mother not wanting. Mrs. Sutton made this inquiry in order that it might be understood that she had never pursued the subject of Mark's relations with keen interest. In fact, she was keeping the 'word of promise' she had given Edgar Talbot 'to the ear, and breaking it to the sense' in that there was nothing tangible in her manner, of which Mrs. Bowden, a woman who was acute enough in her feelings, could take hold and complain even to her own heart about; so she answered now in perfectly good faith—

'Yes, my eldest, and though I say it, who shouldn't say it—though why a mother shouldn't I have never been quite sure—as good a girl as ever lived; foolish as young people will be, you know, my dear, very foolish indeed.'

'Indeed,' Mrs. Sutton replied, with the faintest possible accent of interest.

'Yes,' Mrs. Bowden responded warmly, to even that faint tone of interest, for her heart was wholly with her children, and she grew very thoroughly in earnest the instant aught concerning them was mooted. Then she went on to tell how Elly had given her heart to the son of an old neighbour of theirs, a 'young man who was deserving enough, but who came of a stock who never could do more than pay their way, and whose way was a hard one. I have nothing to say against John Wilmot,' she added; and Mrs. Sutton looked serene indifference to anything that could possibly be urged in extenuation of or in malice against him.

'I have nothing to say against John Wilmot, but Elly might do better—and she will get to feel that after seeing more of you.'

In a moment the indirect flattery made its mark. The insatiable, grasping vanity of the woman who listened, made the commonplace words of the one who spoke dangerous, and productive of evil consequences. Mrs. Sutton liked to feel that in her more graceful presence was the power of making a true-hearted, contented girl feeble and dissatisfied. There would be a double satisfaction in doing this. She would at once revenge herself on these people for being connected with her (in itself an unpardonable audacity), and she would prove to her husband and her astute brother Edgar that they had erred in forcing this personal communication upon her. There was nothing Mrs. Sutton liked better than hurting some one else when she was offended. If she could make the offender suffer, it was good, if she could not, she would in some way wound the next nearest, and be satisfied. These Bowdens were innocent of all wrong towards her (save the original one of being her husband's kin); but not the less did she mean to make them smart if she could do so with such a smiling exterior as would save her from being found out.

'When people put themselves out of their proper places it serves them right if they suffer for it,' Mrs. Sutton thought placidly, as she sat and listened to Mrs. Bowden's hopeful predictions concerning the future of her daughter, if by any happy chance John Wilmot could be put out of her head. The thought that she could deftly put in a few refining touches of sorrowful experience on the canvas of Elly's life, almost reconciled the elegant aunt to the prospect of the companionship of the inelegant niece for a time. The girl had, during their short colloquy, betrayed something like a genuine love for the home and the friends she had so recently left; and this had roused a spirit of antagonism in Marian, who had not a genuine

love for anything save herself. 'If they force her upon me she shall go home and find her John Wilmot tame, dull, and unprofitable,' Marian thought, when Mrs. Bowden had finished her unwise revelations. 'They will all bore her, and she will never be fit for anything better, and it will serve her right for putting herself out of her proper place.' It would have been malevolence on the part of an old, ugly, unattractive woman to harbour such thoughts as these. For the wording of less hurtful ones old women have struggled in horseponds, and been otherwise tortured by their more enlightened fellows as witches, dangerous to the community. But Marian Sutton 'was fair and young and beautiful exceedingly;' moreover, she did not word her thoughts, nor did she suffer the reflection of them to appear on her face as they rippled through her mind. Both Mrs. Bowden and Ellen were delighted with her, and with the suggestive half-promises she made of future intercourse—delighted with and charmed by her long before Mark Sutton came to fetch her and welcome them.

There was rather a fuller exhibition of family feeling made when he arrived. Mrs. Bowden had restrained herself with difficulty before, but when he came she would ask what he thought of Elly? and point out in what respect that young lady resembled the Suttons more than the Bowdens. 'She favours her father about the eyes, and her hands are the same shape as his; but in all else I see our mother in her, don't you, Mark?' Mrs. Bowden asked, looking with affectionate, admiring eyes on the blooming, buxom girl, who lapsed into awkward consciousness of a terribly crushing nature under the ill-advised observations. It worried Miss Bowden and nearly made her cry to see Mrs. Sutton's eyes settle upon the hands quoted, and travel slowly over their length and breadth. They grew redder and thicker while the tour of inspection lasted. The handsome ring the girl wore seemed to make the finger it was upon

stand out in cruelly strong relief, in a way it had never done before, poor Elly could have vowed. Miss Bowden's sole previous experience of great ladies (in her amiable ignorance she placed Mrs. Sutton at once in her list) had been gained from the squire's wife down at Bayford, a kindly old lady, before whom Elly never trembled and distrusted her own hands. But this remembrance brought her no relief now, as she sat wondering what it was that made her so different to her uncle's wife.

CHAPTER XL

SELF-DECEPTION.

The winter months wore away, speedily for some of these people whose fortunes we are following, slowly for others, surely for all. Mrs. Lyon, for instance, found the life she had undertaken to lead for Miss Talbot's benefit very different to that which she had anticipated leading. There was less variety, less excitement, less dining out and dinner giving, less dressing, less dancing, less amusements altogether, and, consequently, less occasion for her to urge faint protests against dissipation than she had confidently looked forward to being able to do. Accordingly sometimes the hours lagged, and the days seemed long, and everything a mistake. On the other hand, Blanche, also, found it all very different to her preconceived fears. Now that Mr. Talbot had established Mrs. Lyon as Trixy's chaperone and guardian angel in society, he seemed quite contented to keep Trixy very much out of society. In short, he instituted a quiet, regular routine, which Blanche saw established with very great pleasure, and which she helped very materially to maintain in unbroken integrity.

'I have a good deal on my mind, and I do not care to go and stand about on other people's staircases just now; you must go without me, Trixy,' Edgar Talbot said to his sister, when an invitation for the whole party (which Mrs. Sutton had procured for them) arrived, shortly after Mrs. Lyon and her daughter

had come to live with them. 'Nor do I, not a bit, Edgar,' Trixy had replied, eagerly. Then Miss Talbot had gone on to give her brother several excellent and unanswerable reasons against her going out for awhile. And he being glad to keep his home circle intact, accepted them after a brief protest.

'But the Lyons! It's not fair to cage Miss Lyon here in solitude,' he said to his sister.

Trixy moved her shoulders with a little, impatient gesture. Something had made the girl very clear-sighted about many matters; and she saw, as in a crystal ball, that Blanche Lyon was as averse, or rather as indifferent, to miscellaneous gatherings as she was herself. Miss Talbot accounted for this fact very readily and very bitterly, when she condescended to take counsel of herself concerning it. The two young painters—the genuine artist, and the dashing amateur—were not about in the set to which Edgar and the Suttons had access; 'and she only cares to meet her cousin,' Trixy thought, indignantly, as she answered—

'Oh, a home life suits the Lyons best: they say so. Pray don't think of them.'

But Edgar did think of them, or, at least, of one of them, and pleased himself harmlessly by thinking what a good thing it was that 'a home life suited them best,' it suited him best too. When some of his ships came home—when some of the schemes now trembling in the balance between failure and success were assured of the latter—when, in fact, the scores of brilliant probabilities that had rather overset his judgment of late, and made him rash, resolved themselves into accomplished facts—then he would speed his wooing, and Blanche Lyon and he would have a home life worth living.

So he thought and hoped and planned for the future, and meanwhile tried to be very well satisfied with things as they were. Blanche Lyon was evidently becoming interested in him, he felt. She showed it in the thousand delicate, minute, almost imperceptible ways in which

a refined woman can show it, he assured himself. She was interested in his family, interested even in that praiseworthy but minor matter of his brother's success. In a conversation she had with him one day—a conversation in which she was quite carried out of the customary calm which marked her demeanour towards him—she spoke out some of her thoughts as to the relative merits of Mr. Bathurst's and Mr. Lionel Talbot's works in a way that nearly cured Edgar of his jealousy of the former. 'You compare them! You actually compare them!' she said, in the petulant tone of one who is stung out of all power of proving the comparison odious by its having been made at all. 'They are on such different levels that you must pull one up or drag the other down in doing it: it's not fair to your brother.'

'The time has not arrived, in your estimation, then, for Cæsar to be praised without derogating from Pompey.'

'Your quotation hardly fits the subject. If you do not feel what I do about it, Mr. Talbot, it is hopeless to try and teach you. I appreciate all Frank Bathurst has done, and is trying to do, and thinks he is trying to do. I think it is very good of him, in a way, to make the attempt to be something more than other people have made him; and I hope his picture will be well hung and well mentioned, and then he can go on painting and having something to think about; but it's absurd to compare him with your brother.'

She was a woman who emphasised her words ever so slightly, often laying the stress in the wrong place. In this case she rather softly breathed upon than emphasised the last word but one of her sentence. And Edgar Talbot felt that it would be well sometimes, perhaps, for his wife to be well disposed towards Lionel, all for his (Edgar's) sake, of course. Amongst other things, he had lately invested Lionel's money in some dazzlingly promising shares on his own account. When the bark of fortune came sailing in, he felt that it would be agreeable to

acknowledge the temporary obligation to Lionel, by giving him as large a share as he chose to take in the home life he (Edgar) contemplated. 'Do you really feel this about my brother?' he asked, almost tenderly; and Blanche turned her face full upon him, covered, as it was, with a quick, hot blush, as she replied, 'Indeed, I do; indeed, I do, Mr. Talbot.' He was resolved to bide his time. But his dream of bliss promised very fairly, he felt.

Meantime Mr. Frank Bathurst, in blest unconsciousness of the exact nature of his cousin's sentiments towards him, went on painting in and painting out his Venuses, and enjoying his life, and cherishing his own notions regarding the daphne, and finding the quiet evenings Lionel and he frequently spent at Edgar Talbot's house better than any other form of entertainment his wealth and position procured him. For some reason or other best known to himself, Mr. Talbot had not fulfilled his threat of requesting Lionel to keep Mr. Bathurst from familiar communion with the home circle. Marking Blanche's manner to Mr. Bathurst with the naturally impartial and unprejudiced eyes of a man who was in love with her himself, Edgar Talbot still saw nothing and feared nothing that could by any possibility affect his peace of mind about her. She was very frank and cordial with Mr. Bathurst; indeed, she talked a great deal more to that blithe and well-satisfied gentleman than she did to any one else. But—and in this, at least, Mr. Talbot did not deceive himself—though she talked to Frank Bathurst more than to any one else, he was far from being the most interesting person to her in the room. She talked to him, and openly expressed pleasure at seeing him; and that the pleasure was unfeigned was patent to any one who chanced to glance at her when the two young men would be announced, and she let him see that the relationship he so ardently claimed was an agreeable fact to her, which, indeed, it was, for the reasons given in a former chapter. So all these circumstances combined to make the quiet domestic evenings exciting and

delightful to Frank Bathurst. They were exciting enough to Trixy, too; but, perhaps, any one would have been justified in declaring them to be less than delightful to that young lady, as 'her eyes on all their motions with a mute observance hung' in a way that spoke eloquently to Lionel.

They were not seeing very much of the Suttons about this time. Mrs. Sutton laughed at the 'new order of things,' as she termed it, and in addition to laughing at them all, she had taken to opposing and irritating Edgar. Whatever hold Edgar had had upon her formerly was weakened now, evidently. She ceased to maintain the smallest appearance of respect for his opinions. She openly charged him to Beatrix with being unscrupulous about other people's feelings, fortunes, happiness, honour almost, when his own interests were at stake. Whatever his influence over her had been, she had freed herself from it; and she gloried in the freedom, and was more extravagant and vain, more frivolous and conspicuous than before; and Ellen Bowden was with her a great deal, and Mrs. Bowden began to hope that John Wilmot would soon cease to be a stumbling-block in her pretty daughter's path.

It may be mentioned here that Mrs. Bowden had been very acquiescent about that matter which had been the primary object of her journey to London. She had not only advanced money to her brother (whose own capital was farmed out under Edgar Talbot's advice), but she bought shares in her own and her children's names in more than one promising speculation. 'Mark was so prudent, far-seeing, honourable, and right-thinking altogether, that there must be safety in following where he led,' she argued, when some of her steady-going old country friends warned her against being led away and dazzled by the brazen images that were the reigning gods of the Stock Exchange. Her argument was unanswerable, for Mark Sutton's character for probity and caution was unassailable. Nevertheless, hints to the effect that 'even he might be mistaken sometimes'

were offered to, and disregarded by her. The greed of gain, the fever of gaining on a large scale, had seized Mrs. Bowden. What had been all-sufficient was now as nothing to her; and as her mental grasp was not broad, nor her brain remarkably bright and strong, she grew haggard and harassed over the ceaseless efforts she made to work out (theoretically) infallibly successful combinations. The occupations, interests, and pleasures of the present were all poor and tame to her by comparison with those that might fall to her lot in the future, if everything went well. On the other hand, if everything went ill, she might soon be reduced to such a position as would cause her present necessities to loom before her regretful vision in the proportions of luxuries. Her mind was much disturbed by these opposite possibilities, yet she had not the courage and resolution to free herself from their wearing influence by 'realizing,' even when she might have done so at a great gain. Golden dreams always led her on. Vague fancy beguiled her into believing that the feeling of unrest would pass away with the novelty. She began—being essentially a good-natured woman—to worry herself as to the way in which she should make her old country friends, with their rough manners and tones, quite at home and at their ease in the society of those new ones which her gold would gain her. Moreover, she was a good deal disturbed about Ellen. The girl had been left behind with the aunt, who seemed so anxious to efface all memory of her long-continued neglect by great kindness now—left behind with this aunt very much against her (Ellen's) will. Miss Bowden felt miserably dull and awkwardly out of place at first in the grand solitude to which Mrs. Sutton condemned her (Ellen) while she was unconsciously undergoing a process of polishing that was to render her a more useful instrument in Marian's hands. If Mrs. Sutton had possessed any principle and any honour, she would not have been a bad companion for a young, unformed country girl. As it was,

Ellen Bowden insensibly caught a slight reflection of the perfect grace, the unruffled ease, the smooth refinement which leavened all that Mrs. Sutton did and said. Marian had the art of telling her pupil what it would be well for her to do without addressing her directly. It must not be understood by this statement that Mrs. Sutton was guilty of the vulgarity of talking at her guest. But she had a way of telling Ellen about other girls who had the unmistakable stamp of 'gentlewoman' upon them; and she would put in the salient points of their manner with a firm, clear touch or two that was not lost upon Ellen, who grew more uniformly quiet, and at the same time less constrained.

Anxious as Mr. Sutton had been that his sister and her family should at least be known to and kindly treated by his wife, he had not gone with the latter cordially when she proposed that Ellen should stay with her for three or four months. 'You mean it so kindly' (he always would think the best of any act of Marian's), 'that I hardly like to throw cold water on your plan; but I can't fancy that she will be the better for the change, or much of a companion for you; besides, poor girl, she has a sweetheart down there.'

'I did mean it for the best. However, I shall say nothing more; the onus of deciding shall be left with her mother and you now, Mark; but I am sorry you should show them you think me a bad companion for the girl.'

After that Mr. Sutton offered no opinion on the subject; and Mrs. Bowden decided that Ellen should remain, as 'her aunt so kindly invited her.'

After that little period of probation or polishing, Mrs. Sutton gave her young charge plenty of change, plenty of gaiety, plenty of opportunities of forgetting John Wilmot and the vows she had exchanged with him. But a counter-influence was at work, of which Mrs. Sutton saw and suspected nothing. Mark Sutton never gave his niece any earrings, or marvellous ball-dresses—



Drawn by W. Small.]

"TRY TO KEEP FIRM AND TRUE."

[See "Playing for High Stakes."]

he left all that for Marian to do, and Marian was open-handed; but he gave Ellen something that the girl could not help valuing more highly than she did any of the things Mrs. Sutton lavished upon her. His gift was a good, genuine, uncalled-for opinion.

'So you're going to marry young Wilmot, Elly?' he said to her, when he was alone with her the first evening of her stay in his house.

'We both mean it now, I believe, uncle,' the girl replied, blushing a little.

'And you would be mightily annoyed if he was the first not to mean it, I suppose? But I would rather see you keep honest of the two. Don't make me curse the atmosphere of my home, Elly, by seeing you change in it. Try to keep firm and true: don't get false and fine in it, child.'

The girl looked up wonderingly as he stopped, choked by a sob. He had his handkerchief up to his face, and was trying to cough and cover his emotion, and, by so trying, making it much more apparent to the girl, to whom it revealed many things that he would willingly have concealed.

'I don't think I shall ever disappoint you in that way, uncle,' she said, feelingly. All her sympathies were aroused by that sudden rent in the veil which habitually fell over Mr. Sutton's domestic policy. All her sympathies were aroused, and yet she feared to betray that she felt any for him, or rather that she felt that there existed cause for her feeling any. It occurred to her, with painful force, that the atmosphere of his home must have been bad for some one, or why should he have warned her against growing 'false and fine.' The graceful lady who ruled his household and shared his name was fine in the sense that a delicately nurtured and carefully tended flower is so. It was just probable that she might be false also, Ellen thought, as she looked at the grieved, humiliated expression which came like a cloud over Mr. Sutton's honest open face.

So, though Miss Bowden's stay with the Suttons was prolonged far

beyond the original term of the invitation, she was not dazzled out of her allegiance to her old love, but remained for several months, at least, as entirely without reproach as Mr. John Wilmot was without fear on her behalf. Mrs. Sutton gave her plenty of amusement, and the girl liked it, for Marian had taken her niece's measure correctly, and only piped such airs as Ellen would care to dance to. Mrs. Sutton was possessed of a fine tact, that would have made her remarkable in a worthy way if she had been a better woman. As it was, it only aided in making her contemptible, but not contemptible to her niece yet. Indeed, Ellen Bowden constructed rather a fine character for Mrs. Sutton, and described the same in warm words to Mr. John Wilmot in one of the many letters that Marian 'was much too judicious to remark upon. If the girl had dared to do so, if she had not feared wounding the kind heart that so evidently preferred feeding upon itself, she would liked to have given her uncle the assurance that his wife never strove in the slightest degree to turn her into any dubious path. But after that one emphatic caution to her Mark Sutton had resolutely held his peace, and had given her no excuse for touching on the topic. Accordingly Ellen nursed her notions respecting the absolute freedom of her will in secrecy, and Mrs. Sutton marked the girl's sense of security in her own integrity of purpose, and took care not to disturb it. Meanwhile Ellen was becoming an ardent student of colour and form, and an untiring illustrator, on her own person, of her increase of knowledge on such matters, under the auspices of the clever dressmaker to whom Marian owed so much, in more ways than one.

CHAPTER XII.

DOWN AT HALDON.

Mr. Lionel Talbot's picture was hung in the middle room in such a situation that it could be seen even on the first of May, when a rapacious sense of art and a few other

motives urges every one in London to go to the Royal Academy. 'The Battle of the Bards' had been rejected; and 'Venus on Hörsel' was unfinished, in consequence of the artist having tired of that type of beauty, since the day the daphne was picked up. So Mr. Bathurst was not represented at that year's exhibition—a thing he had set his heart upon being. The disappointment may seem slight to those who read of it; but in reality it was strong enough to make him take a temporary dislike to the scenes in which it had come upon him, and the haunts where it was well known. He wanted to go into the country, and he wanted Lionel to go with him. He owned a place away in a far-off county—a place that had been left to him by old Mr. Lyon; and he grew eloquent upon its delights one evening at Edgar Talbot's, interspersing his narrative concerning it with soft regrets and gentle remorses for having neglected it so long. 'I have never even seen it since it has been my own,' he said. 'Now I want a place to hide my diminished head in, I remember that there is "no place like home." I have given Lionel a full month to go and study the works of his contemporaries—a euphemism for going day after day and gazing fondly at his own pictures—even his insatiable vanity must be satisfied, so I shall drag him with me.'

The faces of all his auditors underwent considerable changes of expression as he spoke. They were still—though going out more than they had done at first—leading a comparatively quiet life. The presence of these two young men had come to be considered the brightest element in it.

'How we shall miss you, Lionel!' Beatrix exclaimed, quickly.

'And how we shall envy you both!' Blanche Lyon added, hastily.

'I wish some one would drag us all away for a week or ten days,' Edgar Talbot put in, wearily. June came fraught to him with no breath of roses and murmur of gurgling streams, but only with much addi-

tional dust and lassitude. 'I never felt anything like the heat in the city to-day; you fellows are lucky to be able to get out of it.'

'Lucky indeed, Mr. Talbot,' Mrs. Lyon spoke with a sort of ill-used tone—an expression of being debarred by perverse fate from all such delights as the country in June.

'Why can you not all come and stay with us?' Frank Bathurst asked animatedly of the whole group. 'Miss Talbot! do say you would like it; your roses want renovating. I speak as an artist, not as a man, you know! Get your brother to agree to it; the change would do them all good—wouldn't it, Lionel?'

'I hardly know,' Lionel answered, abstractedly. He had caught Miss Lyon's eager, hopeful glance, as it rushed out to search for acquiescent looks. 'It's not that she cares much for Frank's society,' he thought; 'perhaps she wishes to see the place of which she might have been mistress—of which she may be mistress still, if she pleases. Do you care to go, Miss Lyon?' he asked aloud, abruptly.

She had let her hands and her work fall into her lap, in the excitement that possessed her while Frank Bathurst was wording his invitation. She could not succeed in raising them and going on untrémblingly; so she put her work on the table and rose up, saying—

'Care to go! yes, more than I can say—if the whole party can go. I don't care to see the circle broken—do you, Trixy?'

'Oh no, we must all go,' Trixy replied, almost unconscious of what she was saying, by reason of her thinking at the same time, 'She means Frank.' Simultaneously Edgar Talbot was thinking 'She means me;' and Lionel was thinking her 'very lovely.'

'Talbot! we wait your decision,' Mr. Bathurst said, anxiously. 'Let us go all down and take possession of Haldon to-morrow; or Lionel and I would go to-morrow and prepare all things for the reception of the ladies and you the day after; say—shall it be so?'

'Why, we are going to the Opera

the night after,' Mrs. Lyon suggested, in accents in which the mingling of many feelings might be detected. The poor lady disliked packing, and liked being a martyr, and was therefore 'pleased, yet sad,' to find that fate had again interposed that slight obstacle the Opera. But Mr. Talbot swept it away: it was enough for him that Blanche wished for the country, and wished for his presence there. She should have both.

'We will go if the rest like the plan as well as I do,' he said, cheerfully; and after that there was no mistake about it. Blanche Lyon was very charming and kind to him for the rest of the evening. Assurance as to her having no other interest than himself in the projected visit was made doubly sure by his saying to her, 'What if Trixy should come away from Haldon pledged to go back as its mistress?' and her replying, 'I hope she will—I should like it of all things.'

'Really?' he asked, searchingly.

'Really and truly,' she answered, honestly; 'it is one of the dearest wishes of my heart that my cousin should marry your sister.'

'Will you hold the same language when you have seen Haldon?'

'How can I tell? I shall think the same thought—whether or not I shall word it so is more than I can answer for.'

'Don't you think that it's just probable that you may regret that you did not follow the plan old Mr. Lyon chalked out for you?'

She shook her head decidedly.

'Never—never a bit. If I had done so I should never have known——' She almost stopped, but seemed to think better of the weakness, and added the words 'any of you,' blushing warmly. It was a very unexpected move to him on her part, this frank confession that in knowing him there was full compensation for any loss of riches and power. An unexpected—a daring move. He had always heard, and always thought, that there was something unfeminine in a girl meeting a man half way in a declaration of love. But now, though it seemed to him that she was meeting

him half way, he could not accuse her of anything unfeminine. It made his heart beat higher with a better hope than he had ever known before, this thought, that in a few days he might be wandering through some sunlit forest glade with this lovely woman by his side, and no stern necessity for going into the city before him. He almost pitied Lionel for being the only one who would be without a special object down at Haldon.

The following morning, while they were busy in preparations for their ten days' stay in the country, Mrs. Sutton came to see Trixy, and learnt the move that was to be made the following day. The two girls, Blanche and Beatrix, had, under the influence of the sudden excitement of this unexpected break in their routine, come to rather a fairer understanding than was usual with them. It had flashed upon Trixy with an almost blinding light that Blanche was truthful in the sort of affectionate indifference she professed for Frank Bathurst. They both guarded their respective secrets jealously; and so neither liked to speak openly to the other about that which was nearest to the other's heart. Still, though this reserve was maintained, Blanche had spoken of her cousin to Miss Talbot, and had, in a way, seemed to withdraw from any claim on his attention. In short, Blanche had perceived, at last, that her frank friendliness of demeanour towards her cousin was being misinterpreted by Miss Talbot into a flirtation, and that this misinterpretation was causing Miss Talbot much misery. So she had held aloof from Mr. Bathurst, and by this means had got much nearer to Beatrix, who was consequently ill-disposed towards having Miss Lyon's motives and manners underrated by Marian.

'I am not surprised at anything Edgar does,' Mrs. Sutton said, sweetly. 'It may suit him to be considered eccentric—madmen never do get such hard measures dealt to them as sane ones when their schemes fail and look black; but you! what makes you anxious to adorn Miss Lyon's train when she goes husband-hunting?'

'Really, Marian, I cannot agree to such things being said of Blanche—you quite misjudge her.'

'Do I?' Mrs. Sutton replied, mimicking her sister's earnestness. 'Perhaps I misjudged her when I found her flirting violently with my husband in the Grange garden?—asking him "to take her part against his wife," and fooling him because there was no one else to fool.'

'I can't believe it of her.'

'Well, dear,' Mrs. Sutton said, pathetically, 'I only hope that when you have a husband she won't quite poison his mind against you; but those frank women who express the liking they have so very openly, that "there can be no guile in it," innocents think,—don't I know them well? are they not dangerous? Frank Bathurst is just a bit of wax in her hands, to be moulded as she pleases.'

'Why take any interest in them, when you think so badly of them both?' Trixy urged, bitterly. Mrs. Sutton had made the girl's heart ache again with the hardest ache the human heart can know—doubt of the one loved.

'My interest is vicarious: you are my sister, and I don't want to see you left in the lurch either as Miss Talbot or Mrs. Bathurst, through Blanche Lyon's machinations. I shall never forget what I felt that day when I heard her talking so shamefully of me to Mark—actually traducing me to my own husband!' (Mrs. Sutton improved this episode, it may be mentioned, each time she reverted to it.) 'Think what it would have been, Trixy, if I had married him for love!'

'I really can't think, Marian,' Trixy said, dejectedly. 'I am quite tired of thinking about it; and let her take Mr. Bathurst in Heaven's name,' she added, suddenly; 'I want none of them.'

'Exalted sentiment that you will desert, it strikes me, if "one of them" wants you, Trixy; if I were you I would just bear in mind what I said to you once about men with those heavenly blue eyes and their powers of falling in love with every loveable earthly creature they meet,

accept the fact, marry him, and make the best of it!'

'Perhaps I should, if I were you,' Trixy replied, and then Mrs. Sutton got up to go away, remarking sweetly, that, 'It was no wonder Trixy got cross about it—why didn't she make a stand against that Lyon companionship at once and for ever!'

'Because I have nothing to say against her,' Trixy answered, plucking up a small spirit at parting; 'because I really do like her very much—so much that I hate to hate her as you always succeed in making me, Marian, and—come now—because I think she likes my brother as well as he likes her.'

'Then, good-bye,' Mrs. Sutton replied, with a shrug and a smile; 'ask me to Haldon in the autumn, and get Mr. Bathurst to concentrate his energies on another picture, that it may be ready to be rejected next year, while I am there; his attentions rather bore me, good-bye—come back with brighter roses in your cheeks, Trixy—pallor makes you look old.'

So they kissed and parted.

Meantime, while Mrs. Sutton was kindly employed in making things pleasant by her sympathy and sisterly advice to Beatrix, Mr. Bathurst and Lionel Talbot were on their way to Haldon. It was not an eventful journey, therefore the events of it need not be chronicled. For the first hour of the journey the two men amused themselves over 'Punch' and the morning papers. Then they tried to talk to each other, and failed by reason of having nothing particular to say, and each having much to think about; then they tried to sleep—a futile proceeding on a bright, clear June morning. Then they reached Swindon, and changed into a carriage where they were free to smoke and be happy for the remainder of the journey. At six o'clock in the evening they ran into the station that was the nearest to Haldon; and at half-past seven a fly, procured from that station, rumbled up to the entrance-door of Haldon House.

It was a house that, at first sight, seemed wanting in comparison with

the grounds through which they had driven to gain it. The broad stone-bastioned gates, surmounted by the Lyons' crest, a hand holding a hatchet, admitted them into a wide turf-bordered drive. Far back on either side thick woods undulated up and down the hills through which the drive was deftly made to turn and bend in a way that deceived the stranger as to the extent of the park in the most honourable and picturesque manner. Gradually this drive lost its open character; the woods on either side thickened and contracted themselves upon it, and presently it took a bold turn round a precipitous bank, down the slope of which an impetuous little rill gurgled, and passed under, along up to the principal front of the house, between two fine rows of beech-trees, through whose foliage the sinking sun had a hard struggle to cast even so much as the reflection of one ruddy ray upon the ground.

The chief front was not imposing. The entrance door was a small Gothic mistake in the flat, plain, grey surface of that side of the house. The windows were narrow and unornamented, and there was nothing but arid gravel immediately under them. From the right end of the house a rolling sweep of lawn led the eye away to a silver lake, whose banks were fringed heavily with a great variety of flowering shrubs and drooping trees, every graceful twig and flower of which was reflected vividly in the limpid water below. To the left, a high-wall, running out straight from the house to a length of about one hundred feet, enclosed the fruit and vegetables. And further away still, on the same side, a winding path, bordered with blocks of stone and huge trunks of trees, whose rugged surfaces were rendered beautiful by being covered with creeping plants, led away to the stables and out-buildings. In spite of that severely plain, sombre-looking front, there was both beauty and grandeur in this house, to which Mr. Bathurst brought his friend for the first time—the house that might have been *Blanche Lyon's*.

He had never been to Haldon since it had been his own, and now he was surprised to find how different an aspect it assumed to that it had ever had before. The sense of possession brought out all his powers of appreciation as he drove along the avenue and finally stopped at the door. Feeling elated, it was only natural to Frank Bathurst to give voice to his elation. 'I wish I had let you come alone to prepare for them, *Lionel*,' he exclaimed, as he got out and turned his eyes on the lake. 'I should like to have come down with them. I should like to see what they will think of it all as they come up.'

'Can't you do that as it is? Go to meet them,' *Lionel* suggested.

'No, no, that won't do; I should have to go in a station cab—an ignominious way of going out to welcome them.' Then the door was opened, and their portmanteaus and themselves taken into the hall; a small band of much-startled servants, headed by a housekeeper who would have felt more pleasure at the sight of them if she had been prepared for it, came to meet them.

'The serfs are not glad through *Lara's* wide domain,' Frank Bathurst said, laughing, as he went with *Lionel* into a room that the housekeeper declared to be the only one fit for use. 'It will do very well,' he added, turning to that potentate. 'Mr. Talbot and I want nothing better until to-morrow; to-morrow we have a large party coming down, and then I should like the house to be in order.'

This expression of his hopes brought a terribly long explanation upon him; but Frank Bathurst was one of those good-natured men who can listen to an 'o'er-long tale' with a smile and a certain air of interest, even satisfaction. Mrs. Kennet had few servants, as he knew; the establishment had been greatly reduced at her old master's death. 'It was fortunate—she would venture to say that it was very fortunate—that she should happen to have her sister in the house just at present: her sister had lived cook in more than one place where they was that particular that she saw no fear of the dinners

being satisfactory.' Then another fortunate fact made itself known—her 'sister's husband chanced to be there too—and (a still more providential circumstance) he chanced to be a butler out of place.' In fact, luck seemed to be very much in Mr. Bathurst's path, for though he had come down without note of warning, fate was on his side; the two daughters of Mrs. Kennet's sister, both of them housemaids, both, by a strange freak of fortune, out of place, both pearls of great price, were 'here in the very house, and might, no doubt, be persuaded to remain.'

Indeed, the whole family were persuaded to remain, and Mr. Bathurst had every reason to take them at their relative's valuation, and be grateful for the boon of their services. Halden was quite far enough removed from every other human habitation for an unexpected raid, such as its owner had made upon it, to be an inconvenience—more than that, a difficulty—to the one who had to cater for him. Mrs. Kennet was too replete with dignified sense of her own unspotted character as a manager, to make a sign that might indicate a doubt before her young master. After putting the state of the household before him impartially, and making him feel the full force of the obligation he owed to fate and her family for the latter being there—she retired to bestir her inventive faculties about a dinner for the two tired travellers. It was all very well for her master to say 'anything will do for us to-night, Mrs. Kennet;' but this was Wednesday, and she had nothing in the house for him, and if she sent to the village (two miles off) she could not count on getting any fresh meat. There was nothing for it but to rise to the occasion, and heroically sacrifice the supper she had designed for herself and her friends to the hungry, unwelcome, and unexpected ones. This being the case, it is small wonder that both Mrs. Kennet and her sister, who had to cook it now in another way for other lips, should have lost their tempers over the chicken and rabbit they respectively roasted and curried—or that the

butler should have sighed over the vanity of earthly hopes as he was ordered away to the land-bailiff's house to fetch the key of the cellar, in order that the viands which had been designed for him might be washed down with generous draughts of wine by his master.

'They will have to work to get the place as I mean it to be by to-morrow night, won't they?' Frank Bathurst said to Lionel, as they strolled about from room to room, and marked the desolation and decay that had come over everything. 'The library's good,' he continued, opening the door of a dark, finely-proportioned room that was literally lined from floor to ceiling with books; 'but it's too dull to venture in to-night; there's a small attempt at an ancestral portrait gallery in the corridors; shall we go and look at it, and see if Blanche is like any of them?'

'If you like,' Lionel answered, turning round sharply, and commencing the ascent of the stairs at once. Mr. Bathurst followed more slowly, still talking.

'I wonder what she will think of it all, Lal? it will be queer for her to come here and feel that she might have had it all if she hadn't been such a chivalrous little thing that she couldn't stoop to seem to fawn and flatter the poor old fellow. Not much—these pictures, are they? might be better lighted too, eh? Every one of them got in Wardour Street,' he continued, lounging along in front of them with his hands in his pockets, giving a careless glance at each as he passed; 'it's utterly impossible that Lely could have painted every one's great-great-grandmother, you know; no, not one of them a bit like Blanche. I shall get her to sit to me when she comes down, and give her portrait the place of honour in the gallery; in fact, I have a great mind to clear out all these and hang the *Battle of the Bards* here—fill the gallery with my own works. I'm not a Lyon, so I'm not bound to respect these shams; I'll hear what Blanche says about it.'

'She will weed out a few of them willingly, I fancy,' Lionel replied, when Frank Bathurst ceased speaking at last; 'but only transpa-

rent shams—any that are good she will give the benefit of the doubt.’

‘That’s a good pose,’ Frank said, suddenly stopping before the portrait of a lady, and then stepping back to get a better light on it. ‘Look, Lal! there is something in that!—three blues—fillet, dress, and shawl all different shades—yet harmonising perfectly; I should like Blanche to sit to me in such a velvet dress. Why, she has a bit of daphne in her hand!’

‘And what of it?’ Lionel asked, indifferently. He thought the picture superb in colouring and composition; but he was tired of hearing Mr. Bathurst’s artistic plans relative to ‘Blanche,’ and the daphne said nothing to him.

‘It’s about the most extraordinary coincidence I ever heard of,’ Frank muttered, as he tore himself away from the contemplation of the picture at last. Then he went on to wonder what Blanche would think when he showed her the picture, and her bright glance fell on the flower the lady held. Would it speak touchingly, thrillingly to her, as it did to him? Then there darted through his mind a conviction that everything was tending towards the desirable end of Miss Lyon having what would have been her own if she had not been obstinate. He—the happy possessor—was magnanimously ready to love and marry the woman who pleased his taste better than any other whom he had ever seen. She, judging from the daphne incident, was equally ready to love and marry him. Even the weather seemed likely to favour the wooing—how could the latter but speed fast and favourably in such leafy glades as were around on every side, under the clear blue sky and the warm, bright sun of June?

So he thought, as he walked lightly along, whistling a waltz, to join Lionel, who was standing looking rather dull at the end window. It struck Mr. Frank Bathurst as he came up that there was something rather inconsiderate and ill-timed in Lionel looking dull or feeling dull, when he (Frank) was just realizing how very happy and prosperous he was. The view of his own pleasant

lands—the prospect of his own future bliss—the thought of the rich reward he was contemplating bestowing upon worthy beauty—were one and all such enlivening considerations that he felt Lionel to be wanting, in that he remained uninfluenced by them. A friend who showed himself slow to rejoice, whether he saw cause for it or not, when Mr. Frank Bathurst rejoiced, was not a friend exactly after Mr. Frank Bathurst’s heart. ‘What’s the matter with you, Lal?’ he asked, languidly, as Lionel continued to gaze gloomily out of the window; ‘are you thinking that this part of the country will do as well as Wales for the sketching tour in August? I am.’

‘No,’ Lionel replied; ‘I was thinking that perhaps we all work the same mine, rich as it is, too freely; I shall leave Wales to men who have something to tie them near home, and go to Algeria.’

‘Has anything gone wrong with you, Lal?’ asked Mr. Bathurst, with a wistful look in his blue eyes, and a most unusual hesitation in his tones. But Lionel shook his head, and laughed so cheerily at the supposition, and met Frank’s wistful eyes so dauntlessly, that Mr. Bathurst was quite reassured. ‘Let us go down by the lake, and smoke a cigar in the moonlight,’ the master of Haldon said, taking his guest by the arm and leading him back along the corridor; ‘you frightened me for a minute, Lal, by talking of Algeria; whatever comes to me, old boy, I can’t spare you.’

Then they neither of them spoke again for some time, not indeed until they had reached the border of the lake and sent up several light wreaths of smoke. Then Lionel Talbot looked back at the massive pile, the finest side of which fronted them now, and said—

‘Whatever the autumn sees me doing, Frank, you ought to give up roaming; such a place as this deserves to be inhabited.’

‘Ye—es,’ Frank answered, lazily. The rippling lake at his feet, the star-studded sky, the beauty of the moon-lighted scenery around, were all shedding their soft influences

upon him. His memories of bygone days and nights under southern skies, by lovelier lakes, were dreamily reawakening. It was pleasant to him to think and remember; so he went on thinking and remembering, and paying no manner of heed to Lionel's suggestive speech. It was only one form—a harmless one—of his gay selfishness to be rather inattentive to anything that did not interest him at the moment.

'Who was the fellow who wrote something about a lake?' he asked, presently.

'Several fellows have written something about a lake,' Lionel answered, laughing; and Frank withdrew his cigar from his lips for a moment, and said, as he sent many perfect rings of smoke circling away into the air, 'I meant Moore. I was thinking of—'

"By that lake, whose gloomy shore
Skylark never warbles o'er,"

and congratulating myself upon my lake being so much more congenial to my temperament.' Then he strolled on a few yards into a broader moonbeam, and went on to remark upon the fact of its being a 'small wonder that the one for whom Mariana was awarey should have kept her waiting so long, since Tennyson chose to plant her in a house where mice shrieked in mouldering wainscots, and rusted nails and broken sheds and other marks of desolation and decay abounded.'

'It's just possible that Mariana might have been worth the braving all those disagreeable sights,' Lionel said, pursuing the fanciful theme.

'No, no; the mistress of the Moated Grange must have been an untidy woman—a sort of Miss Havisham without the Estella; that sort of thing must have gone on for many years too, or the place couldn't have got into such a state—an old Mariana with her cheeks fallen in and her hair thin, and a general air of dowdiness about her, by reason of her dress being old-fashioned; that's what it would be, if one realized the subject properly and painted it.'

'Don't,' Lionel replied.

'Well, I'm not likely to,' Frank

said; then he added, rather inconsequently, 'but I was looking at that little island there, and thinking what a jolly sort of prison the Lady of Shalot had—'

"Four grey walls and four grey towers
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle embowers
The Lady of Shalot."

There we have it all. That laurel rises like a tower in the island. All we want—'

'Is the lady,' Lionel interrupted.

'And we shall have her to-morrow night,' Frank replied; he was thinking indifferently of both the beautiful women who were coming. But Lionel fancied that his friend thought only of Blanche. Perhaps it was that his fraternal pride was jealous about Beatrix. At any rate, he made no response to Frank's remark about her being there to complete the picture to-morrow night; and so the conversation tagged, and they soon felt that it would be well to go in.

'To-morrow night she will be here.' This was the text on which Lionel Talbot preached a brief, bitter little sermon to himself, as he stood at his bedroom window looking out over Frank Bathurst's lawn and lake. 'To-morrow night she will be here; she, with her keen eye for the beautiful, will be glancing over glade and alley, terrace and turf, lake and island; all will be spread out before her, and she will remember that all might have been her own, and then, naturally, she being a woman, her heart will warm to the man she has benefited; and the thought will arise that it may be hers still, and by the time the thought and the wish and the love she'll soon feel for him are realized—well, I shall be in Algeria.'

It wearied, worried, tantalized, and perplexed him through all the visions of the night. 'To-morrow night she will be here,' that bright, brave, beautiful, young gentlewoman born, who had carried on the wearing strife so gallantly, who had never flinched at poverty, and to whom it would now come pleasantly and easily to be rich and happy at one stroke! It seemed to Lionel

Talbot that Frank was just the man to win any untouched heart. He had pretty well fathomed poor Trixy's feelings on the subject, but Blanche's were beyond him. Love was often born of expediency, he reflected. On the other hand, Blanche was scarcely the sort of woman to create a sentiment out of an obligation. 'God bless her! however it goes,' he thought, as the grey dawn chased the languid June night away; and he fell asleep from sheer weariness.

Frank had remained awake a very little time, thinking so affably and kindly of every one of whom he thought at all. He was delighted with himself, for instance, for having thought of coming down and of collecting such a pleasant party as it promised to be. He was enchanted with Haldon! Of old it had never possessed half the charm and importance it now held for him. He had often suspected that there was a rich vein of humbug in that phrase that 'the poor man who walks through a beautiful park has as much pleasure in the same as the noble lord who owns it.' Now his suspicions were verified, and he was very sure, from the most agreeable experience, that he preferred being the noble lord. He was satisfied with Mrs. Kennet, and with his good fortune in coming into undisputed possession of such excellent servants, and with the prospect of the companionship of the two girls who were coming the following day, and with his own intentions respecting one of them, and with everything, indeed, save Lionel Talbot's resolve to go to Algeria.

'That won't do at all,' he muttered, sleepily; 'we must all talk him out of that.' Here his amiable intentions grew vague and undefined, and he slept the sleep that waits on sound digestion and an untroubled conscience.

The empire of the night was peace down at Haldon, but up in Victoria Street it was tribulation and woe for one of the members of one household. Edgar Talbot had been at home the greater part of the day. It was astonishing, he said himself, how greatly the necessity lessened

for being present at the centre of business action when a man decided upon putting himself beyond the possibility of attending it for some time. He had been happy and cheerful and 'young,' Trixy declared, during the whole of the day. Very much to their surprise, he had attended the two girls on a little shopping expedition they made, and, still more to his own surprise, he found himself liking it, for Blanche Lyon consulted his taste several times, declaring that Mr. Lionel Talbot's brother must know better than she did which colour would go well with another. It was very flattering to him, Edgar Talbot felt, that Blanche should think so highly of his brother. It made him think more kindly than ever of Lionel, and he always had thought kindly of and been affectionately disposed towards Lionel, be it remembered. He bought his sister a wonderful hat to wear down at Haldon, and exchanged significant glances with Blanche when the latter said that 'it was just the shaped hat Frank liked—no feather tumbling over the brim to spoil that perfect outline.' Then he had gone gaily home with them rather earlier than he wished, because they both declared that they had a great deal of packing to do, which must be done by daylight. 'You don't consider what time muslins take, Mr. Talbot,' Blanche said to him, with a laugh, when he pleaded that they 'should go into the park now.' 'There's a sad want of proportion between the dresses we are going to take and the trunks we are going to put them in.'

'Why not go just as you are—you couldn't look nicer—and not trouble yourselves about packing?' he said, looking at their clear, crisp muslin robes.

'Ah, you don't know what mighty efforts are requisite to obtain even such small results. I should be sorry to answer for the effect on Mr. Bathurst's nerves if we appeared before him to-morrow in the damp of the evening in these dresses that now strike you as all-sufficient for the whole time of our stay. No, we must go home.'

Accordingly he went with them, and found Mr. Sutton waiting for him in a little room with a window in the roof, that was dedicated to business interviews. One glance at his brother-in-law's face showed Edgar Talbot that there was something wrong.

'You have got rid of those — ?' Mr. Sutton said, interrogatively, mentioning some shares in a projected railway from one little-known corner of the earth to another even more remote and less frequented.

'Not exactly; that is'—Edgar Talbot stammered, hesitated, stopped, then cried out, 'you don't mean to tell me it's too late.'

'Read that,' Mr. Sutton answered; and Edgar sat and read—in what words it matters not—it is sufficient to say that they told him that one of his barks of fortune was wrecked in port; one of his golden dreams had melted away, leaving him a very much poorer man, not only in reality but in the knowledge of the world that knew of his investments.

He felt himself to be considerably crippled in his resources, and when he was able to realize it he confessed to Mark Sutton that he was so crippled, and that he regretted having tied the 'millstone of this establishment' about his neck. 'You'll right yourself in time if you're prudent,' Mark rejoined; 'meantime,' he added, feelingly, 'it's a good thing, a very happy thing, that you're not married. Let Beatrix come to her sister; that will be a fair excuse for dispensing with Mrs. Lyon.'

'Thanks; but I can't do that well,' Edgar replied.

'Why not?'

'Oh, I can't do it well,' Edgar repeated. He could not bear the thought of loosening any link that might be formed between Blanche and himself. In the midst of the sharp pain he felt at having lost a fortune, there was alleviation in the thought of Blanche Lyon. The vision of her in her bright, bonnie beauty, as she had walked by his side that day, made him feel this life worth having, the eternal battle of it worth fighting. She was a good motive power. Other fortunes were to be won, and should be won for her. His was not by any means a nature to turn to pleasure and shirk pain. Still, now he could not help feeling that to-morrow was very near, and that then he would be on his way to flowery glades and forests green with Blanche Lyon. For a while at least he would banish his business and turn his back upon trouble: for a while June and Blanche and flowers and fresh air should have all his heart and soul. Mark Sutton marvelled to see the ambitious young man bear the first bad blow—the first sharp reverse he had ever met with—so well. It touched the man, whose heart had ached sadly with sorrowful foreboding, when called upon to tell the tidings, that Edgar should receive them so steadily. It touched Mr. Sutton more to hear Edgar's parting words, 'Good-bye, old fellow; I'm glad I haven't crippled you, any way!'

CHANGES.

'Each heart has its somebody.'

OH, Alice! what are you doing,
Sitting alone in your room?
The others downstairs are dancing;
You must not stay in the gloom.
What is the matter, my darling?
Your voice is husky with tears;
And your cheek was wet when I kissed it—
There—whisper—nobody hears.

No answer—must I conjecture?
Is some one you love to blame?
Has somebody cross'd or vex'd you?
Hush, dearest, I use no name!
There's no need to flush so crimson,
For what have I said or done?
Isn't somebody some one's darling?
Each heart has its Number One!

Come, lift up those drooping lashes,
And give me your hand to hold;
Look for a moment at me, dear—
Am I not wrinkled and old?
Nay, smile not, I mean it, Alice;
There's reason in what I said.
I know how the world regards me—
I'm only a poor old maid.

Oh, Alice! I'm weak in crying;
But the mere touch of your arms,
Which circle my neck in pity,
Calls up the old past, and warms
My spirit with bygone visions.
I see, in a far review,
The days when somebody loved me,
And I was a girl like you.

Perhaps you will scarce believe it,
But, a long long time ago,
I'd a face that was not uncomely,
And I'd friends who told me so.
This wrinkled skin then was polish'd,
These dim eyes were clear and bright,
My hair had a shade as golden
As yours when you face the light.

And thus—but it seems a fable
When you cannot even trace
A remnant of youth and beauty
On my sorrow-graven face;
When scarcely a friend about me
Knows even my Christian name—
Well, all I can hope is, Alice,
Your lot will not prove the same!

It was not my fault entirely;
Yet somehow I learnt too late
Brotherly love and sympathies
To nurture and cultivate.
Perhaps if I'd done so sooner
I might not be standing here,
With never a friend but you, love,
To yield to my tale a tear.

Listen! I'll tell you what happen'd—
The same happens ev'ry day;
Somebody told me he loved me,
And I gave my heart away!
We parted—he named a twelvemonth;
He vow'd to be true and trust.
Ah, well!—I will put it briefly—
His vows were written in dust!

We parted—and worse than distance
 Was the world that crept between ;
 The glowing lights of the present,
 Which deadened what once had been.
 He forgot me when I was absent,
 He went after something new—
 Alice, don't look so indignant,
 'Tis what hundreds of people do !

I waited—oh, how I waited !—
 I never would lend an ear
 To evil reports that reached me ;
 I waited with scarce a fear.
 I wondered about his silence,
 But never about his *faith* ;
 If I had not heard for certain,
 I had waited unto death.

I waited—the tide of pleasure
 Flowed soft to my weary feet ;
 And suitors and friends press'd round me
 With murmurings fond and sweet ;
 But I pass'd them all by unheeded,
 Their friendship would never do
 For one who was waiting for somebody—
 For one who was firm and true.

It came, after months of waiting—
 That signal of dark despair—
 Men spoke of my friend as married,
 And said that his wife was fair.
 Oh ! far, far the bitterest trial
 The tidings could afford
 Was not that his love was lost to me,
 But that he broke his word.

Now long years of toil and trouble
 Have cast a tremulous shade
 Over that moment of anguish ;
 Old Time has made sorrow fade.
 I can tell my Alice about it,
 Which I could not have done before ;
 But when Time has acted as plaster
 We may venture to touch a sore.

My heart is as whole as ever—
 You smile as you wipe that tear ;
 But, Alice, it only gathered
 At sight of your sorrow, dear !
 It's just what I meant to tell you ;
 No trouble is sent in vain.
 If I had not suffered myself,
 I'd not understood your pain.

Come, if you misdoubt my meaning,
 I'll tell you what chanced to-night.
 Did you see that old man downstairs,
 Whose hair was so thin and white ?
 If I remember properly,
 You stood in the corridor
 When, in the throng of careless guests,
 He came through the entrance-door.



Drawn by J. D. Watson.]

CHANGES.

Do you remember our meeting;
 Our hands how quietly clasped;
 The long, calm gaze in each other's eyes;
 And the silence that elapsed,
 Before our hearts recovered speech?
 Well, people would never have thought
 That he had once been my somebody;
 Even *you* discovered nought.

Yes, it is just as I tell you—
 After many bitter years
 We met, with no show of feeling,
 No sighings, reproaches, tears.
 We met but as mere acquaintance,
 With greetings constrained and cold;
 Only a glance of wonder
 That each should have grown so old.

He spoke—but his very accents
 Were changed from their former tone,
 That querulous voice was never
 The voice of my love—my own;
 'Twas the voice of the gouty husband
 Of her in maroon and lace,
 Who sat by Sir John at dinner,
 And grew so red in the face.

Well, Alice, this world of ours
 Is made up of changing things;
 We, too, are part of its changes,
 For we, too, are born with wings.
 We're changing our nature daily,
 And worms will be by-and-by
 Transformed into shining angels,
 Which neither can change nor die.

So, Alice, don't sit here moping
 And sighing for some one's sake;
 When the world is made up of changes
 There's no fear your heart will break;
 For even the loved and injured
 Get over the pain at last,
 Grow wiser, calmer, and better
 For lessons learnt in the past.

And, Alice, one thing is certain—
 Whene'er we are grieved by change
 We return with renewed affection
 To One whom no years estrange.
 'Tis comfort to mete His kindness,
 And feel it can never end;
 Oh, Alice!—I've proved it daily—
 God is the old maid's friend.



LILY'S LOSS.

CHAPTER I.

MR. BRAMWELL was a Bristol merchant, and he owned a charming house and grounds within a stone's throw of the Durdham Down.

One fine July evening several people were collected together in Mr. Bramwell's garden, sitting in a group on the lawn under a laurel hedge. Two ladies, strikingly alike in features, but with a sufficient disparity of age to show their relationship, were in the centre of the group, on a garden seat. Around them were several gentlemen, Mr. Bramwell's particular friends, and most of them, like himself, merchants in the good old city of Bristol. They had all been invited to celebrate the wedding-day of their host and hostess, the latter of whom, who was the eldest of the two ladies on the garden seat, was in the highest possible spirits, and, by her gaiety and unaffected manner, completely fascinated the little group collected around her.

Lily Bramwell, who sat by her mother's side, was unusually quiet and reserved, and by no means shared her mother's flow of spirits, or joined in the animated conversation in which her father's friends were engaged.

She kept turning her eyes every now and then towards the garden-gate, as if expecting that some one would put in an appearance from that quarter, whose presence she either particularly desired or dreaded. It might have been either the one or the other.

Each time that the wheels of a carriage were heard, she seemed to tremble; and as each fresh visitor arrived, a cloud of annoyance or disappointment stole over her face. She received their congratulations awkwardly; and, having replied to their pretty little compliments with some ordinary set speech, she turned away her head and the old melancholy expression came back. There was but one sentence to be read in those

soft blue eyes, now quite misty with scarcely-restrained tears—

'Will he never come?'

A lively conversation was still kept up among Mr. Bramwell's guests, several of whom had noticed Lily's reserved manner, though of course without making the slightest allusion to it. The conversation ran from business matters to politics, from politics to the ordinary gossip of the day; and when once fairly started on this always-engrossing topic, one of the guests alluded to the sudden appearance in Bristol of a young lady of extraordinary beauty. She was of Italian extraction, he said, and reported to be of very good family, and to possess a large fortune. She had only been in England a very few days; and on the afternoon of the previous day she had been seen for the first time on her brother's arm at a flower fête in the Clifton Zoological Gardens. Her brother, Luigi Amato, was well known in Bristol.

Every one who had seen the beautiful foreigner was especially loud in her praise on this occasion. Still, Lily Bramwell took no interest in the conversation, and did not appear to hear what they were talking about. The name, which was being repeated again and again, was not unfamiliar to her.

Luigi Amato had been in Bristol for more than a year, and Lily had heard him constantly alluded to. Young, rich, and gifted with a lively imagination, and unusually charming manner, he had made a decided, and by no means an unfavourable impression at all the houses to which he had been invited. But what did Lily care about young Amato, and his taste for music, and soft tenor voice, and powers of fascination, when her mind at this moment was absolutely on the rack, all for a certain somebody who was invited and expected, but who had never come.

It was now very close upon dinner-time, and Lily's uneasiness was becoming more and more apparent. All the guests but one had arrived. The deserter was Arthur Dayrell, a young Bristol merchant, and the *fiancé* of Lily Bramwell. What could possibly be the meaning of Arthur's forgetfulness? If unwell, why had no message been received?

On such an occasion it must be business of the utmost importance, or neglect of the most unwarrantable nature, which could keep Arthur away from Mr. Bramwell's house, and his pretty daughter's side. No wonder, then, that Lily Bramwell was reserved, and that she looked so unusually sad.

Dinner was announced, and they all left the garden and walked towards the dining-room. Just before entering, a servant put a note into Mr. Bramwell's hand. He just glanced at it, and addressing his wife, said—

'I am sorry to tell you that Arthur Dayrell can't come to-day. He is detained in the city by sudden and most urgent business, and begs me to convey to you all sorts of apologies and regrets.'

Lily Bramwell looked sadder than ever; and, had it not been that she knew that all eyes were turned towards her, some of the tears which came welling to her eyes must have escaped, in spite of all her efforts to restrain them.

'By-the-by,' said an old grey-headed gentleman, 'before I left the Commercial Rooms this afternoon, an ugly rumour was abroad. Report has it that Dayrell's house has been engaged in a ruinous speculation.'

Several of the guests here added fresh items of news to the rumour, which they all appeared to have heard in the city.

'I'm afraid Dayrell's house won't stand such shocks as these,' said Mr. Bramwell; 'I've heard his credit is not over good, as it is.'

'Let's hope he'll tide over it,' said the old gentleman, in a tone of voice which implied that, in his opinion, there was no chance whatever of such a contingency.

'Ruined!' said Lily to herself. 'I never expected such a blow as this.'

The dinner was not altogether a success. They had got upon disagreeable topics. Lily's melancholy was infectious; and soon Mr. and Mrs. Bramwell were attacked with the same malady. The evening passed away wearily, and at a tolerably early hour the party was broken up. The day, which had commenced under such happy auspices, had but a miserable termination.

Day after day passed away, and still Arthur Dayrell never came near the Bramwells' house. Lily lived upon her sorrow in silence, waited patiently for her lover's arrival, longed anxiously to hear from him, or some tidings of him, —but Arthur Dayrell kept away, and Lily received no comforting news.

The day after the little party on Mrs. Bramwell's wedding-day, her husband had to hurry up to London on business, and so it was impossible for him to go and look Arthur up, as he had intended to have done. When Mr. Bramwell came back, he thought Arthur's conduct rather strange in not having come near any of them, and, to tell the truth, felt a little annoyed at his extraordinary neglect as regarded Lily. And so he wrote. The answer was stiff and formal; business was pleaded as an excuse for not coming to call on the Bramwells. There was no mention whatever in this letter of Lily. Mr. Bramwell talked the matter over with his wife, and it was ultimately decided between them that the subject should be allowed to rest for a few weeks. The Dayrells were, no doubt, in an awkward predicament as far as business was concerned; and Mr. Bramwell had no wish, however much pained he was, to intrude upon his old friends with another disagreeable subject. As for Lily, she did not quite look at Arthur's conduct in this matter-of-fact light.

There had been passages of love between them deep and tender, and, as she had thought, poor girl, very true. There had been wild moments when, hand-in-hand,

they had talked of a bright and happy future, and had alluded to separation as an utter impossibility. Would business, then, detain him from her side, unless there were some other and far more engrossing cause? Would business be of so urgent a nature as to prevent his writing a few lines to say that he was, as he had ever been, true to his own love? What a comfort such a short note would have been to the poor girl, heart-broken at the very idea of having to believe her own suspicions. She had heard of these quiet separations before from girl-friends of hers. She had been told of men—men with affection, but of a weak and vacillating temperament, who had stolen away from their engagement and honour, in the very night, as it were, making long absence and deep silence tell the tale of their untruth. That Arthur Dayrell had a heart she knew; that he was wild and impressionable, she feared. And this was to be the end of her romance! This was the man she had bowed down to and almost worshipped; a man who had taken her many times to his heart; a man to whom she had disclosed the secrets of her young life; a man whose comforts and happiness she had prayed on her knees that she might study; a man who had repaid this devotion by turning his back upon her—who had left her with her tears, heartbroken and alone in the world.

About six weeks after the dinner-party, as they were sitting down at breakfast, the servant as usual brought in Mr. Bramwell's letters and the local morning paper. It was Lily's duty to cut this for her father while he was reading his letters. He was rather longer than usual over them on this morning, and Lily employed herself during the interval with glancing over the contents of the paper.

Suddenly the paper dropped from her hands, and the poor girl burst into a violent fit of hysterical weeping. She turned towards her mother, who had come over to her, and sobbed out—

'Oh, mamma! it is really all over now!'

'What is it, my child?' asked Mrs. Bramwell.

'Read it, mamma; read it. I really cannot speak any more.'

Lily handed her mother the paper, and left the room.

Mrs. Bramwell read the announcement of the marriage of the sister of Luigi Amato with Arthur Dayrell.

A fortnight after this little scene in the breakfast-room, a very large public ball was given in the Victoria Rooms, in honour of some event of general interest.

Lily Bramwell had expressed a particular wish to go, and her parents had no wish to prevent her. Everybody would, of course, be there; and there seemed every chance that, on this occasion, the newly-married couple would, for the first time, meet Lily Bramwell face to face. It is a harmless curiosity to wish to see your rival; and Lily was certainly not proof against this. Her parents knew their child well enough to be quite sure as to how she would behave on such an occasion, and had quite sufficient confidence in her to know that her good-breeding would triumph over and be superior to any natural feelings of spite or annoyance which might possibly be lying in her bosom. There was certainly no danger or likelihood of a scene. Lily's grief was too deep to be vulgarized. It was a trying ordeal, of course, for her to go through; and her father and mother could not quite make out why she should insist on making herself a martyr, which she certainly intended to do. It is a pleasant sort of a pain, though, this meeting after a great defeat; and though it makes our hearts bleed, we all go through it, and would go on taking draught after draught of the nauseous dose without a moment's hesitation.

When Lily Bramwell appeared in the ball-room, all eyes were instinctively turned towards her. The story had flown from mouth to mouth, and the sympathies of the room were most certainly with Lily Bramwell.

She looked charmingly. Her dress, which was of pure white, unrelieved by any colour except the red camelia which glowed in her fair hair, accorded exactly with her pure and innocent face. She looked what she was, a perfect lady; and as she sat by the side of her still handsome mother people looked in vain for some remaining traces of the great grief which she had endured. There were certainly none in her face. They were all buried away in her heart of hearts, and no one had any key to this but herself. All novice as she was in the art of dissimulation, she so entirely put people off their guard by her cheerful looks and sweet demeanour that they most of them made up their minds that the past was quite effaced from her memory. She was the object of universal attention and admiration when Arthur Dayrell and his wife entered the ball-room. It was so late when they came that Lily had almost made up her mind to be disappointed. And now a cold shiver ran through all her veins, and her heart beat quickly.

The arrival of the Dayrells made rather a sensation in the ball-room.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Dayrell's striking beauty, the easy, seductive grace of her manner, and her commanding figure made a great effect in the room. She had hardly time to make her entrance before she was literally surrounded. Her card was full in less than five minutes, and she had given sufficient promises for extra dances to fill many more cards. In the general movement which took place on Mrs. Dayrell's arrival the little group round the Bramwells was dispersed. The orchestra burst into life again, and the first few bars of a quadrille were played. Lily remained sitting by her mother's side. It seemed the work of a moment. Somebody was brought up to her and introduced; and in two seconds she was standing by the side of Luigi Amato in a quadrille, with Mrs. Arthur Dayrell as her *vis-à-vis*. The courage of which Lily Bram-

well had boasted, and which she had steeled herself into maintaining, was very nearly giving way at this point. She had longed to see her rival, and now she was dancing opposite to her. Luckily Arthur was not with his wife; had he been there the shock would have been too much for Lily. He had left the ball-room soon after his first appearance with his wife, and was now busily engaged in the card-room. Perhaps, under all the circumstances, this was the best thing he could have done.

The set in which Mrs. Arthur Dayrell and Lily Bramwell were no inconsiderable items was soon made up. Women can take in a great deal at a glance. There was one of these sharp, searching glances, so peculiar to women, and which are nearly in every case so particularly accurate, which came from both the women on this particular occasion. One look seemed quite sufficient for both of them. Their eyes met once, and then only for a second. They never met again.

Mrs. Arthur Dayrell's toilette was extremely rich, but in the most perfect taste. She had cameo ornaments, from the antique, and of priceless value, as ornaments for her neck, head, and arms. Every attitude was a picture, every movement displayed grace and *abandon*. There was a kind of dreamy listlessness about this beautiful Italian woman which contrasted strangely with the fire in her eyes and the proud curl of her scarlet lips. She was certainly a gloriously handsome woman. No one could avoid noticing the extraordinary contrast between these two women. As far as beauty went of course there could be no comparison. But there were many, no doubt, in the room who would have valued one smile from simple-looking Lily Bramwell more than ten thousand from this superb creature.

After this famous quadrille, Lily Bramwell was never allowed to rest. She valed exquisitely, and was secured by all the best dancers in the room. She could have had half a dozen partners for every dance if she had cared for them. Mrs. Arthur Dayrell did not value, and seemed

somewhat annoyed at the unusual attention which was being paid to Lily. She left the ball-room early, and Lily had the entire possession of the field. Luigi Amato remained, but he did not dance again.

He took a seat next to Mrs. Bramwell, and with great tact led the conversation towards that subject which is invariably welcome to a mother's ears—her daughter's beauty. From this he began with equal tact to express regret at having been so long in Bristol, and intimate with so many friends of the Bramwells, without ever having had any opportunity of knowing them intimately. He had heard about them frequently, of course, but by some strange coincidence or fatality they had never met so as to secure an introduction before this happy occasion.

Mrs. Bramwell could not, under these circumstances, fail to say how delighted she would be for him to call and know them better; but she could not help thinking when she got home about the strange impetuosity of his manner and the burst of enthusiasm with which the invitation was received.

Luigi Amato was not long in availing himself of Mrs. Bramwell's invitation.

No one knew better than he how to ingratiate himself with strange people, and few were more successful in the art of pleasing. His first visit led to another and another, and on each occasion he received a warmer welcome than the last.

It was not very long before Lily Bramwell's name began to be coupled with that of the handsome young foreigner. We who live in the world know that people are apt to chatter soon enough about these things. Strange to say, Lily Bramwell did not repel the attentions paid to her by Luigi. Perhaps she was piqued at the bad treatment she had received at the hands of Arthur Dayrell, and it was, no doubt, a not unpleasant kind of revenge to be seen everywhere with a man who had been his rival, and to have her name connected with his by all their mutual friends.

Girls who have been badly treated

don't, as a rule, like the idea of going through the world with that ugly word 'jilted' pasted on their backs; and it is some poor consolation to them, in the event of their being served in the shameful way that Lily Bramwell was by Arthur Dayrell, to show the conscious world that there are as good men to be found any day in the week as those who by their conduct seem to say that they have so far gained influence over a woman that they can behave as badly to her as can be without incurring any feeling of remorse or shame.

Lily Bramwell was, as far as the world's eyes were concerned, very much flattered with the attentions that were being paid to her. What was passing in her heart it is not our province to say.

Luigi Amato was not slow in perceiving the favourable impression he had made, and he followed up his advantage like a skilled tactician. His attentions became more and more marked, and every day he ingratiated himself more and more with Lily Bramwell and her parents.

The wounded heart needs consolation, and in the sweet art of consoling the dark foreigner was an adept. The tender ivy clings to the rugged elm, and just in the same way poor heartbroken Lily got to enjoy the society of her new friend, in whose hands she seemed almost powerless. She never actually loved him, perhaps, certainly not in the same way that she had loved Arthur Dayrell, but she liked the petting and attention of the big dog in whose presence—delicate little kitten as she was—she knew she was free from all possible kind of danger.

Under his care, and acting up to his advice, she met and shook hands with Arthur Dayrell. It was best that they should not be bad friends any more he had said, and so Lily steeled herself for the ordeal, and under all the circumstances got over it very creditably.

Of course it was a terrible meeting, but Lily had made up her mind before she undertook the task that there should be no faltering on her side.

They met, shook hands, and passed on; and after that moment Arthur Dayrell became an ordinary friend and no more to Lily Bramwell.

The presence of mind of women when they are 'put to it' is proverbial, and Lily was every inch a woman in this respect.

It was not long before Luigi Amato went privately to Lily's father and asked his formal consent to a marriage with his daughter.

'As regards this most important subject,' said Mr. Bramwell, 'Lily is entirely her own mistress. I should never interfere on this point with my children, unless, of course, I saw anything positively distasteful or objectionable in the person concerned. I need hardly say that I have no fault to find with you. Go then to Lily herself, and learn from her lips what she has to say in the matter. If she consents I can only say that I shall consider you a very lucky fellow, and wish you joy with all my heart. My daughter Lily, though her father says it, is not the kind of wife that a young man picks up any day in the week, particularly in this degraded and sordid match-making age.'

Lily Bramwell looked up into the eyes of her rough protector, and, in the most artless and childlike manner possible, said she would be Luigi Amato's wife.

Luigi was most anxious there should be no delay in the marriage. It was his express wish, too, that there should be no 'fuss' at the wedding, and extracted a promise from Mrs. Bramwell that it should be as quiet as it possibly could be.

The young couple were to start for Italy as soon as they were married; for at Genoa Luigi Amato had some pressing business, which would very probably occupy him for some time to come. The young Italian anticipated some pride in introducing his charming little English wife to his friends and relations over in his native country.

Though Lily Bramwell had gone through the ordeal of meeting and shaking hands with Arthur Dayrell, she had hitherto 'fought shy,' as it is called, of Arthur's wife.

Of course it was not probable that

these women could possibly be great friends, and it was eminently natural that they should mutually put off as long as possible the inevitable meeting.

Mrs. Dayrell, *née* Euphrosyne Amato, knew very well what her husband had been once upon a time to her brother's intended bride; and Lily had a woman's natural repugnance to a woman who had supplanted her, as it were, in the affections of the man she had idolized. And so they had eyed one another at a distance for some time past, but said nothing. In their hearts, however, they knew well enough that there would never be any very violent friendship between them. Lily, like the sweet-tempered girl that she was, arranged plans in her mind to avoid any open breach.

Now, however, that she was to become Luigi Amato's wife the evil day could no longer be postponed; for it was requisite that Mrs. Arthur Dayrell, *née* Euphrosyne Amato, should be introduced into the family of which her brother was soon to be so conspicuous a member.

Mrs. Bramwell arranged a little garden party—for it was summer time—and collected together a few friends, in order that the introduction might be as little formal and painful as circumstances would permit.

When Mrs. Arthur Dayrell arrived both Mrs. Bramwell and her daughter went across the garden to meet her, and their greeting was at least unaffected and sincere. Mrs. Arthur Dayrell was stiff and formal, and received their congratulations with very little warmth. This line of conduct she continued throughout the afternoon, joining but little in the amusements that were going on, making herself as little agreeable as possible, and, in a most marked manner, sitting by herself on the window-sill of the library window, which opened out on to the lawn. Her eyes were constantly fixed upon Lily, and the look which she gave her from time to time was by no means an agreeable one. Luigi noticed, in common with many of the other guests, his sister's extraordinary conduct, and went towards





Drawn by J. A. Pasquier.]

LILY'S LOSS.

[See the Story.

the spot she had selected for herself.

'I hardly think you are behaving very well to our hosts or their guests,' he said. 'Is it absolutely necessary that you should isolate yourself from them, and treat us all with such very marked contempt?'

'You know me well enough, I should think, Luigi, to guess the reason,' she replied. 'I don't intend to act civilly where I don't feel it. I absolutely detest that simpering girl.'

'I will not allow you to speak like this to me.'

'Then why did you begin the conversation? I am very comfortable where I am, and do not feel in the mood for indulging in wild panegyrics on Miss Lily Bramwell.'

'You are talking absurdly now, Euphrosyne. I don't wish you to put yourself more than ordinarily out of the way; but I think, for my sake, you might behave civilly to poor Lily.'

Mrs. Arthur Dayrell was not a badhearted woman, although her temper was none of the best, and she idolized her brother. She felt that she had gone a little too far now, and was really sorry when she saw that Luigi was pained.

'Well, never mind, Luigi,' she said, soothingly. 'I will go with you, and make pretty speeches to your flaxen-haired doll.'

When she turned to take Luigi's arm, in order to gain the croquet party on the lawn, she met Lily Bramwell face to face.

Lily had crept slyly up when Luigi was talking to his sister, determined to surprise him with her, and to show him that there should be no animosity on her part towards Mrs. Arthur Dayrell. She came at an unfortunate time, and unavoidably overheard a greater part of their conversation. When she turned to go it was too late, and a dull kind of stupor stole over her. Luigi was unaware that Lily had overheard his sister's remarks.

'My sister is very anxious to have a turn with you in the garden,' he said. 'I shall be so glad, Lily, if you turn out to be capital friends.'

Lily, still stupefied, heard nothing

until Luigi had repeated what he had said two or three times. Luigi concluded that he had another refractory spirit to deal with, and that he would have to go through the same amount of persuasion over again. He had not anticipated that he would have any difficulty with Lily.

When Lily recovered herself, and was aware that she was being addressed, she stared at them both vacantly, and said nothing. This made matters worse than they were before. Luigi Amato was annoyed, and he did not disguise his annoyance.

'Perhaps I was wrong,' said he, in rather a sarcastic tone, 'to have interrupted the delightful reverie you were in, and which you seemed to enjoy so thoroughly. I will take a turn or two with my sister myself, if you wish to continue your dream, and don't desire to be disturbed. Any other time will do as well for my sister.'

Lily blushed deeply. She could not get Mrs. Arthur Dayrell's cruel words out of her head; and now to these were added the first unkind speech she had heard from Luigi himself. There was a lump in her throat in an instant, and, despite of all her efforts, the tears would come welling to her eyes. Luigi Amato regretted in an instant the harshness of his tone, and was really grieved to see that poor sensitive Lily was pained.

'Lily, darling, I am so sorry,' he said. 'It was cruel of me to speak as I did. You know I would not hurt you for the world.'

'Never mind his sarcasms, Lily, dear—I must call you so now,' said Mrs. Dayrell, with as much ease as she could muster; 'he thinks it clever, but he never means what he says.'

Touched with the frankness of Luigi's apology and the kind and unusual tone in which his sister spoke, Lily was all smiles again in an instant, and, notwithstanding what she had overheard, she consoled herself inwardly with the old and uncomfortable adage, that 'listeners never hear any good of themselves,' and took the desired turn

round the garden with Arthur Dayrell's wife.

'Well, my worthy brother,' said Mrs. Arthur Dayrell, later on in the evening, when he was conducting her to the carriage, to go home—for Arthur had found some excuse, not altogether relishing the idea of a garden party at that house under altered circumstances,—'how do you think I have behaved on the whole? I don't think so very badly! But I warn you,' she added, not giving him time for a reply, 'I don't honestly like her, and you must not expect me to go through this kind of thing every day in the week when you come back, for I can't stand it.'

A fortnight afterwards Lily Bramwell became the wife of Luigi Amato; and within a very few hours of their wedding the happy couple were on their way to Florence.

CHAPTER III.

Six months passed away, and still Luigi Amato and his wife gave no signs of returning to Bristol. In fact there were whispers that in all probability Amato would remain for some time longer where he was. To the initiated it became known that he had been engaged in some very daring speculations, which had not turned out quite so well as he had anticipated; and, indeed, there was a report that the Italian house would hardly weather the storm. The various communications were made to Arthur Dayrell by foreign correspondents, and through him they reached the ears of Lily Bramwell's father. Mr. Bramwell was naturally nervous on his daughter's account, and he wrote to her, in order to elicit, if possible, some confirmation or denial of the rumours. However, the fears of all were alleviated by the sudden reappearance at Bristol of Luigi Amato and his wife, at the end of a year from the time they had quitted the great commercial capital of the west of England.

Lily had been kept quite in the dark on the subject of her husband's commercial transactions, and therefore she had neither good nor bad news for her father. With a woman's quick instinct, however, she had

guessed that matters were not going quite smoothly; but, with a woman's natural good sense, she said nothing, trusting if it were as she anticipated, that there would be a favourable turn of the wheel of fortune, and that all would eventually go well.

The Amatos had been back in England about a month when one morning Lily was disturbed in her morning's work by the appearance of a servant who handed her a letter.

It was in the handwriting of her sister-in-law. She opened the letter. She had hardly read the first few lines before her eyes swam and her lips became pale. She trembled violently, but making an effort to command herself, she rang the bell and ordered the carriage round immediately. She gave the coachman orders to drive to Mr. Arthur Dayrell's house, which was charmingly situated in the picturesque village of Frenchay, a few miles out of Bristol. Arthur Dayrell was alone in the room to which Lily was conducted. She could see by his face that he was as much agitated as she was. He had got on what she used playfully to call his 'business face' in the old days. But he came towards her and led her to a seat. She sat down, but he remained standing, leaning one arm against the mantelpiece.

'I can guess by your face what you would say,' said he, in an agitated voice, 'but you must not ask impossibilities. I have little power to save your husband. I have received intelligence, private intelligence, remember, from Florence that Amato's trickery has been discovered. The particulars of the case have been telegraphed over here, and at this very moment he may be in the hands of justice.'

'But if he has not been arrested you can save him?'

'I don't think I would if I could.'

Lily Bramwell covered her face with her hands, and shrank from the touch of Arthur Dayrell when he came towards her to give her comfort.

'Oh! Arthur,' she said, 'I did not think so badly of you. You have wronged me enough, heaven knows, without bringing further disgrace

not only upon me but upon the man I have married.'

'I have wronged you, Lily, I know it, and am suffering for my sin by a life of utter misery. I would go to the end of the world to save you further pain, but this man, what shall I say of him? Can I spare him, coward and traitor as he is, now that I have got him in my grasp?'

'My husband! How can he have injured you?'

'Injured me? that is a mild term, Lily, for the wrongs your husband has inflicted on me. I have kept my secret until now, and have suffered tortures heaven knows how terrible. I can keep the secret no longer; you must hear everything.'

Lily uncovered her face and looked wonderingly towards Arthur, who had gone back again to the mantelpiece, where he remained pale and immovable as a statue.

'You cannot have forgotten, Lily, that terrible time when the story of the impending ruin of my father's house was in everybody's mouth here in Bristol—that time when I kept away from you because I was in disgrace, and because I had no wish to burden you with my sorrow. It was true that we were very nearly ruined. It was true that had ruin and disgrace fallen upon us it would have been all through me. Mine would have been the hand to bring dishonour upon my old father and his children. Would that I had never listened to the treacherous voice of this disgraceful man! But I did listen to him, and forged the very fetters of a life-long despair. At the time to which I am alluding Luigi Amato was a comparative stranger to me. We had met occasionally, but merely as very distant acquaintances. But this man had seen you, Lily, and he loved you with all the wild fury of his southern nature. He dogged my footsteps, and I could not free myself of him. He took me entirely off my guard, and, like a fool that I was, I believed him to be sincere. I took his advice and engaged the house in a ruinous speculation. Step by step he dragged me down merely to lift me up with his own hands. He

had but one object in view, and that was to prevent my marriage with you. When he knew I was on the verge of a precipice he came and offered me assistance. I was entirely in his hands, and he knew it. He could ruin me and us all. He saved us, for I accepted his offer, but the security I gave for his filthy loan was the happiness of my life. I promised him I would marry his sister, and then he knew that he was safe. You know the rest.'

'Oh! Arthur, say no more,' sobbed Lily, 'I cannot, cannot bear it.'

'And this is the man,' he continued, bitterly, 'that you would have me save. If you only knew the life I have led these years past.'

'You have suffered terribly indeed, and I hardly dare beg your forgiveness for him; but, Arthur, he is my husband, and I must stand by him to the last.'

'What would you have me do?'

'Save him and me!'

'Oh! Lily, what would I not do for you, my first, last love. For your sake the prize must slip through my fingers, and the hour of vengeance I have prayed for must reap no fruit. I will save you, Lily, and your husband must cling to your skirts.'

Arthur Dayrell's voice was quite softened now. He sat down by Lily Bramwell's side, and taking her hand in his he said, 'There is a ship in port which is just free of her cargo of sugar. She sails at day-break for the West Indies. I know the captain of the vessel well, and whatever favour I ask of him he will perform. If I beg him to take your husband on board and assist him to escape he will do so.'

'And you will do this?'

'If I facilitate your husband's escape would you follow him?'

'Is it not my duty to be ever at his side?'

'Not when a husband has behaved as yours has done. He is unworthy of you.'

'I will not go with him.'

'Then part of the debt is paid off.'

Arthur Dayrell went to a writing-table, and wrote out the instructions which Luigi Amato was to follow. When he had finished he gave them

to Lily, promising that he would himself go down to Bristol and give directions to the captain of the 'Santa Fé.'

'Remember, he must be on board to-night.'

'He shall. Thank you, and God bless you for what you have done!'

When Lily arrived at home she waited in anxiety for her husband's return. Hour after hour passed away, and still she sat motionless, her eyes fixed on the clock in her little sitting-room.

At last she heard his footsteps, and knew that he was so far safe. He came into the room and threw himself into a chair.

'Oh! Luigi, I am so glad you are safe.'

'Safe! Do you know all, then? I thought I might have spared you this pain. But there is no time to be lost. The news has already been telegraphed to London, and I am not safe for an instant. The worst of it is that I don't see there is a chance of escape. What shall we do?'

'There is one chance for you,' said Lily, bravely. 'Read what is written here.'

'It is Arthur Dayrell's handwriting! You don't know all. That man would kill me if he could.'

'He has promised me to save you, and he will keep his word.'

'Promised you to save me! And on what terms, may I ask? Has he been here in my absence bargaining with you? Has he dared to speak thus to you?'

'Arthur Dayrell has not been here. I have been to him.'

'I will receive no favour at his hands.'

'Are you mad, Luigi?' said his wife, with energy, 'to speak like this at such a time? Heaven knows that man has suffered sufficiently at your hands. Come, let us both forget the past. Your wife shall not upbraid you in your hour of sorrow. For my sake you will obey these instructions, will you not? It is better perhaps that we should part.'

'Part! Lily, that is an awful word. My love for you has made me sin as I have done; is there no repentance? May I never hope that you will follow me and sweeten my exile?'

'I can promise nothing.'

'But you will forgive me?'

'Women have forgiven who have suffered more terribly than I—more terribly than I shall suffer. God grant that you will sincerely repent, and that he will be merciful to you during the life that is before you.'

They parted; and when the 'Santa Fé' was being towed out of the Avon Lily was still tossing in her bed alone with the first deep grief she had known. She got to sleep at last, and then the sails of the ship were unfurled, and Luigi Amato was safe from the hands of his pursuers.

* * * *

The good ship 'Santa Fé' never put into harbour again. Some months afterwards a bottle was picked up by a peasant on the coast of Ireland. In it was a slip of paper on which the following words were written. 'Ship sinking fast. No chance of escape. God have mercy on us all!—L. A.'



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HOW I SET ABOUT PAYING MY DEBTS.

An Oxford Story.

'NOW my dear Frank,' said my father, replenishing his glass the while with some very particular port the old butler had brought out that evening in my honour, 'as you start for Oxford early to-morrow, I may as well say now what little I wish to say to you respecting the important step you are about taking in entering university life.'

I took some filberts and listened attentively.

'The social advantages of the university,' continued my father, 'are, I hold, of very great importance; but I do not wish you to sacrifice its educational advantages to—to—it's ahem!—'

'Oh, no! certainly not,' I interposed (somewhat vaguely, perhaps).

'So I shall expect you to take your degree in the usual course: if as a mere pass-man, well and good; if with honours, all the better. Although you will not have to earn your bread (in the accepted use of the term), you will find such advantages of use.'

I assented to all this, inwardly deriving no small consolation from the fact that I should not be *obliged* to encounter any examination at once, as my matriculation had already been triumphantly accomplished.

'I shall allow you 500*l.* a year and the expenses of a horse,' added my father; 'and I shall give orders for you to be kept supplied with sound and wholesome port. On this I shall expect you to live without incurring any debts. If you do run into debt, you must discharge

all such liabilities out of your own earnings.'

One of my father's great characteristics was firmness. His was genuine firmness, and it had nothing to do with its weak counterfeit, obstinacy. I knew that he meant what he had said about my paying all debts by my own earnings, and that it had not been added merely for the purpose of giving weight to his warning, or seasoning his advice with the condiment called 'solemn chaff.' Of course I had no intention then of incurring debts; but I felt that I should have to accept the alternative if I did.

A few words shall dismiss my university experiences. Five hundred a year, with the expenses of a horse (to this a servant was added), and a gratuitous supply of port wine, seemed in contemplation a mine of wealth that would be fully equal to all my necessities. So, relying on the plenitude of my resources, I started a second horse, and even a third during the hunting-season. I liked (in common with all other Oxonians I ever made acquaintance with) easy-chairs and luxurious furniture. I was fond of looking at handsomely-bound books, if I did not read them very carefully; and good pictures I had quite a passion for. In music I took great delight; so a grand pianoforte, hired at a rate that would have paid its price once a year, formed a conspicuous feature in my rooms. All these likings (and many others of an expensive nature might be added), together with a great taste

for pleasant and genial society, sufficed to render my career an expensive one. One thing I can conscientiously aver: if money was wasted thoughtlessly on capricious whims and pleasures, it was not wasted on any pursuits that could be condemned as vicious. The result of all this expenditure may be easily guessed.

I was never ploughed; but in those periodical encounters with the examiners the university rules obliged me to engage in I may say that the former always died game. Never shall I forget those last final rounds, conducted across that awful green table, when all one's mental pugilistic science was brought into play to make a very partial knowledge reach the whole length of a subject; while enthusiastic friends, with mistaken kindness, looked on in breathless silence, and encouraged me with smiling glances or imaginary pats on the back, as I turned towards them with a sickly smile of recognition, and hollow pretence of being quite at my ease.

But the time came when all these ordeals had been safely passed, and I was going to 'put on my gown' next degree day. So I sent round to collect my various bills, determining to be business-like, and to arrive at an exact knowledge of my position. After some persuasion, the coy tradesmen sent in their bills, not to ask for payment, but pledges as it were of their confidence in my honour and solvency. After two or three efforts in addition (compound) that brought each time varying results, I arrived at the conclusion that I owed nearly 800*l*. My father's words recurred to me, not by any means for the first time, and I set myself to wondering how I could earn it. Literature—the writing of a successful novel that should accomplish the whole matter as by the magic of a fairy's wand—was the first idea that presented itself, as I believe it does to very many others under similar circumstances. I dismissed the thought as impracticable. A brighter one succeeded. I would get a tutorship. Many men of my acquaintance had done so. Certainly they were usually

honoured men, and not heirs to baronetries and ten or twenty thousand a year. But I might seek one in the guise of an ordinary B.A., and none need know that my prospects in life pointed to the possession of a very old title, and far-spreading estates in two western counties, not to mention a street in Mayfair and a house in Belgravia.

'But you will want testimonials, and that sort of thing, you know,' said Hatfield, of Baliol, with whom I was discussing my plans over a cigar.

'Grantham, my coach, will manage that for me, I have no doubt,' I answered.

'Well, if you get any decent thing, or keep it for two months, I'm in for a plough,' he observed.

Bearing these words in mind, it was with a feeling of justifiable pride that, a few mornings after, I carried some half-a-dozen letters in my hand to his rooms, where I was going to breakfast. I had called at the Union on my way, to look at the letter-rack; and I must confess to a feeling of considerable surprise when I beheld there sundry missives bearing the mystic initials I had adopted in my advertisement in the '*Guardian*.'

'By return of post, too!' I inwardly exclaimed. 'Parents must take the bait very easily, or tutors must be scarce.' I hurried away, as I was late, without opening them, reserving this pleasing task for Hatfield's rooms and presence.

'Is it a dun that I see before me?' cried that gentleman, as I entered, letters in hand.

'Behold the triumphs of advertising and education!' I rejoined, showing the letters in triumph.

Alas! they were all circulars from agents who would be happy to place X. Q.'s name on their registers, &c., &c.

I looked rather blank, as I had no fancy for prosecuting my search after employment in this manner.

'There is no harm in it, you know,' said Hatfield; 'but, of course, unless a man is all honours he cannot pick and choose, and you must take what they send you, or get nothing at all.'

But I was not reduced to this; for Grantham, to whom I had confided my plan, called at my rooms during the day, and offered a solution of the difficulty.

'If you are really in earnest about this, I think I know of a thing that will exactly suit you. It is to prepare a young fellow for Oxford. They want a man who is a gentleman, up to the work, and fond of country sports, hunting, &c. But what would your father say to your taking a private tutorship? Does he know of your plan?'

'It is the result of an agreement between us respecting my running into debt,' I explained. 'I shall write and tell him what I have done when I have undertaken an engagement.'

'But, if Sir Grahame objects, would you throw a place up?'

'He would not allow me to act dishonourably,' I answered; 'and were I engaged I must accept the consequences.'

'Very well: if you are determined to risk it, I can offer you a tutorship in the family of a General Gawston, of Gawston Flats, Norfolk, where you will have one pupil to look after, be resident in the house, and receive a salary at the rate of 150*l.* a year. They are in want of a man immediately.'

I caught at the bait, and in return it caught me. My father, to whom I wrote at once, to communicate my having entered into this engagement, replied that, had he been consulted prior to my binding myself, he would not have consented to such a plan; but that now, as the engagement was already formed, I must fulfil it; at all events, until another tutor could be found. I had been imprudent in accepting a situation not befitting my station; but I must now abide by my imprudence, &c.

There was one thing in favour of my concealing my real position in life while at Gawston Flats. My father, once Sir Grahame Luxton, had several years before assumed the additional name of Penreston on coming into a large property, left by a distant relative, on the condition of his taking the name. This

condition did not bind the children, however; and so my sisters and myself were Luxtons, as we preferred retaining the name of our ancestors, a more ancient and honourable one too, by-the-by, as my father always took care to impress on us.

I determined not to visit Luxton Court before leaving for Gawston Flats, as I must confess that, now my plan of getting a tutorship was accomplished, I felt an unacknowledged regret that I had so easily succeeded; and I sometimes wished I had set about paying my debts in a different way. Feeling that the home air and style at Luxton would hardly suit me under the circumstances, and possibly fearing some banter from my father, I left Oxford as soon as I could; and in a few days I was driving across the country (flat and uninteresting to my western eyes) that led from Mudhole Station to Gawston Flats. On my arrival about half-past five in the evening, I was ushered at once to my bedroom, and I sat down by the acceptable fire to have a good warm. All at once the thought came into my mind, 'How about going down to dinner? Is the tutor usually there? Does he wear full dress? The servant said nothing about dinner time.' Solving these questions by the reflection that a tutor was still a gentleman, and feeling hungry, I determined to dress and go down. So I rang for my portmanteau, and found that Colonel Gawston dined at seven.

It was dark when I had arrived, but a hurried glance had shown me that the place was evidently a gentleman's; and this impression was confirmed when I wandered down about a quarter to seven, and beat about among some doors in the hall for that one which belonged to the drawing-room. Taking a lucky shot at one with a white handle, I entered a large, well-lighted room. A lady, not unpleasant looking, but dressed very severely in black velvet, rose from a chair near the fire.

'Mr. Luxton, I presume,' she said, rising.

I bowed, deriving some comfort from the fact that she betrayed no surprise at seeing me.

'Colonel Gawston has only just come in, or he would have seen you before,' she continued, after shaking hands with me. 'You must have had a cold journey; pray take that chair by the fire.'

I did so, and we chatted on very easily until the master of the house joined us just as dinner was announced. He greeted me very pleasantly—perhaps just a little stiffly—and then I gave Mrs. Gawston my arm, and we went in to dinner. I cannot say I felt quite at my ease in my new position; but this did not interfere with my appetite, and dinner passed off with sufficient conversation going on between the courses.

'Mr. Luxton, you will take some more port?' said Colonel Gawston, as he filled his glass, and drew his chair near the fire, on the departure of his wife for the drawing-room. I followed his example in each respect.

'We have never had a resident tutor before,' he continued; 'and we are anxious to make you as comfortable as we can. We shall always be glad of your company at dinner at seven, if you prefer dining late, but we hope you will quite consult your own inclination about that. Your pupil you will see when we go to the drawing-room, I expect. He remained out longer than I did. To-morrow we can arrange further details, as may seem necessary.'

I shall never forget my first morning over the books with my new pupil. He was a very nice boy, but with a far too conversational tendency, I thought, as I tried hard to keep his mind (and my own) fixed on the work in hand. He would break off suddenly from some heartrending *rahas éw* passage to ask me if I had kept horses at Oxford, or if the proctors had ever been down on me. Once or twice I found myself tripping, and only too ready to run on into the unclassical conversation such questions suggested, while Horace and Euripides lay open, but forgotten before us.

'Florence is coming this evening,' he said one morning about a week after my arrival, as he was finding

the place (always a long business), before commencing to translate.

'Who?' I asked.

'Florence; my sister, you know. It is always jollier when she is here. You ought to see her ride. Most girls are great muffs, I think; but she isn't a bit.'

I heard a little more of Florence, but I did not see her until dinner-time. We had taken our seats when she entered, and hurriedly took a chair opposite me. Mrs. Gawston murmured the customary words, and we bowed across the table. The conversation was general, as our party was so small. Miss Gawston, who I found was grown up, and not the somewhat hoydenish young lady her brother's description had led me to expect, joined in it freely, and we found several things to say to one another across the table. I thought her extremely pleasant, I remember, and remarkably pretty. She seemed about nineteen, and had just returned, I found, to my horror, from a visit to some friends in the west.

'My daughter tells me she met some Miss Luxtons while she was away. Are they any relations of yours?' asked Mrs. Gawston. I may say that that lady and I were on very pleasant terms; but I had every evening to encounter the severity of black velvet (I used to wonder whether she had but *one* dress), and to feel my teeth on edge if by any chance my hand touched her robe as we marched in to dinner.

'The daughters of Sir Grahame Penreston,' explained Miss Gawston.

I felt very red as I explained that they (being really my sisters) were connections, and then I made a vigorous effort to change the conversation.

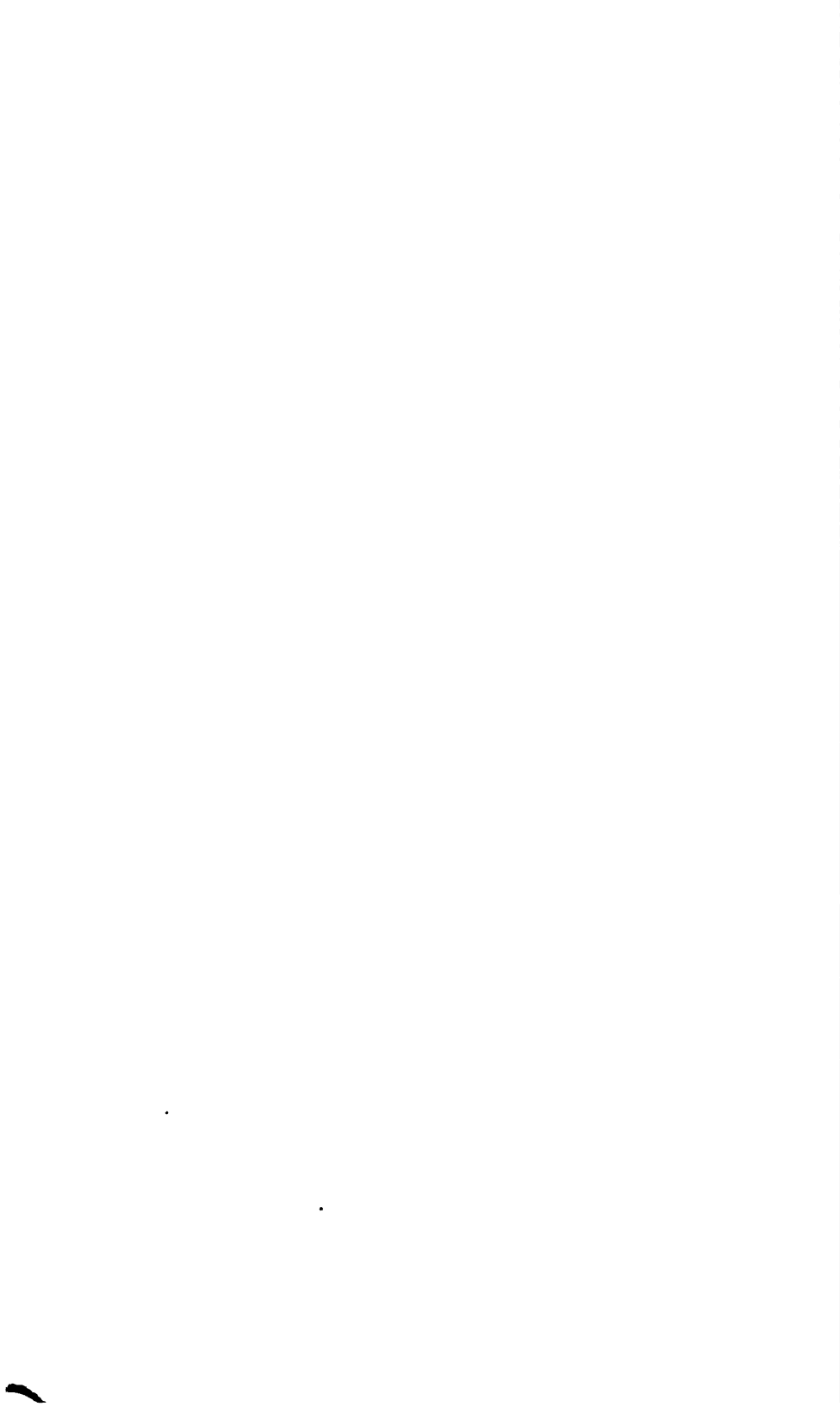
As the Colonel and I entered the drawing-room Miss Gawston, seated at the pianoforte, was playing *the Largo Appassionato*, from Beethoven's Second Pianoforte Sonata. 'O, *pray* do not stop,' I cried, as she *paused* on our entrance; 'that movement is more than beautiful.' *Thus* pressed, she continued, then on to *the Scherzo*, and lastly the brilliant *Rondo* in splendid style. I was delighted.



Drawn by L. C. Henley.]

HOW I SET ABOUT PAYING MY DEBTS.

AN OXFORD STORY.



'You are fond of music,' she said.

'Very.'

'You play, perhaps, or sing?'

'I play the violin, and I sing to a certain extent.' I was longing for her to ask me to bring my violin down. I saw a music-volume close by labelled 'Violin and Pianoforte.' Mrs. Gawston sat funereal, statuesque, and immovable. Colonel Gawston was asleep, and his son reading Mayne Reid's something or other. Miss Gawston was trifling with the keys, possibly she feared asking the tutor such a thing. I was desperate. 'Shall I fetch my violin and music,' I said. Without waiting for an answer I went. The next moment we had commenced, and during the evening we played together, and then, emboldened by this beginning, we sang together. What happens once usually happens twice, and the next evening we occupied ourselves in the same way. Not always only in the evening though, but many a stray half-hour during the day we found time for a little music. Then, also, she rode very well; and as her brother and I rode almost daily, we often found ourselves taking the same direction; so altogether I saw a good deal of Miss Gawston. Need I tell the result? Before a fortnight was over I was deeply in love, and my intention of recommending Colonel Gawston to look out for another tutor was unfulfilled. We often met before dinner in the library, where there was a large Japanese screen that shut out the door. Moving very slowly towards the room one evening near dinner time, I overheard some words that made me pause before entering, and cough violently, if not affectedly, in order that my presence might be known.

'Ahem! my dear'—the voice was Colonel Gawston's—'don't you think, my dear, that Mr. Luxton is—ahem—rather, just a little, perhaps not prudently, intimate with Florence?'

'I have thought so, certainly,' responded his wife; 'and I was very glad this morning to receive an invitation from Lady Fitz-Pedigry for her, as it will take her away at once. I have accepted it for her, and I thought of going with her to town

to-morrow or the day after to see Madame Valencienness, as she——'

At this moment I interrupted the good lady by entering the room, disconcerting her rather by my sudden appearance.

The words I had overheard determined me to learn my fate from Miss Gawston before she left, as I felt that, under any circumstances, it was impossible for me to stay much longer at Gawston Flats in my present false position. If I could not gain a personal interview I determined to write to her; and that night I wrote a candid letter, which I purposed sending her if no opportunity for private conversation presented itself. But fate was kind, and the next morning I met Miss Gawston accidentally in the garden about an hour before breakfast-time. The result was that she did not appear at breakfast, and that when we rose from that meal I requested a few minutes' private conversation with the Colonel. Never shall I forget his look of indignant amazement when he learnt that his son's tutor had proposed to his daughter, and that with success.

'Mr. Luxton, when I engaged you,' he said, 'there was one thing I was assured of most emphatically, and that was that you were a gentleman. This is not the conduct of a gentleman to enter my house, to undermine the affections of my daughter, to entrap her into an engagement! Sir, you should have thrown up your situation here rather than have done this.'

I felt he had justice on his side. As far as he knew, I was nothing but a penniless suitor who had abused his peculiar position by using the many opportunities it afforded him of making love to a young lady, a reputed heiress of apparently superior social rank. I could not help being amused, nevertheless, as I reflected how different his tone would have been had he known all. Something prompted me not to tell him yet, but to go on pressing my suit without advancing at once the real claims I had to back it. We were still in the midst of the discussion, the matter was seemingly going hopelessly against me, when

a sharp knock at the door interrupted our debate. 'Come in,' said the Colonel, impatiently. A servant entered with a note. It was a telegram calling the Colonel at once to town on important business, military, I think he said.

'Mr. Luxton, I must postpone this matter until my return,' he said, hastily, looking at his watch. 'I have not more than ten minutes to spare. I appeal to your honour not to make any unfair use of this unfortunate interruption.' He passed out of the room. A new idea struck me, and I followed quickly.

'I had thought of going to town this afternoon for the night, and Rupert expressed a wish to accompany me,' I said; 'will you allow him to do so?'

'Certainly,' said the Colonel, looking relieved. 'If you wish it, you might remain away longer, not necessarily in town of course, merely letting Mrs. Gawston know where Rupert is.'

'Rupert, do you mind just coming with me to Belgrave Square first,' I said to my pupil as we alighted from the train.

'Oh, no,' was the reply, and so we were soon rattling away in a Hansom to my father's town house.

'Surely that's you,' said Rupert, looking at a photograph lying on the table in the drawing-room, where we were waiting for my father to appear.

'Yes, I am friendly here,' I replied, getting red. 'If you will take a book for five minutes I shall have transacted my business with Sir Grahame.' I moved towards the door just as it opened, and the master of the house walked in.

'My dear Frank, I hardly expected to see you,' he said, as he entered. 'You are looking very well indeed, in spite of your teaching labours. I hope you have thrown that foolish engagement up.' He stopped as he caught sight of Rupert.

'Let me introduce my pupil to you,' I said.

'You will both dine here to-night, of course, and sleep,' said my father, shaking hands with Rupert. 'I am

going to Luxton to-morrow by the 11.45 train; couldn't you come too? A change will do you good, and your sisters will be delighted to see you. They are under the impression that you are abroad, and I have not undeceived them. You will join us too, I hope, Mr. Gawston.'

It was so arranged, and the next day we started for Luxton. In the meanwhile Rupert had, with some wonder (but he was too well-bred a boy to make many remarks), asked me if Sir Grahame Penreston was my father, and I saw him writing a letter that evening, probably to his mother or sister. I felt very much disposed to write to the latter, but I determined to wait until we reached Luxton. It is hardly necessary to say that, without abusing the Colonel's appeal to my honour, I had managed to let Florence know before I left that the obstacles in our way were not as insuperable as they appeared.

Arrived at Luxton Court, I wrote to Mrs. Gawston, having previously enlightened my father as to the true state of affairs. The Gawstons, if not as ancient a family as ours, were eminently respectable, and my father, who could make no objections, was pleased to be unmerciful in the way of banter. 'A fine way to pay your debts indeed!' he concluded by saying. 'I called on my father in town,' I wrote in my letter to Mrs. Gawston, 'and he gave us an invitation down here, which I took the liberty to accept. Rupert and I propose staying here two nights before returning again to the Flat. Enclosed is a letter to Miss Gawston, which I hope you will not object to hand over to her, and I trust that you will all pardon the slight deception I have practised on you,' &c. The letter was given to Miss Gawston, and, as the reader may conclude, no further objections were made to our engagement. Before three months were over we were married.

'And how about the debts?' does any one ask.

Well, my father paid them.

D. N.



GOLDSMITH AT THE TEMPLE GATE.

GOLDSMITH, returned to Temple Gate,
 Waits till the drowy porter opens.
 The night is cold, the hour is late—
 His wealth no pounds, no shillings, no pence!
 Weary, he seeks his lone abode—
 But now the butt of wits at dinner—
 And his last guinea has bestowed
 Upon some straying, starving sinner!

What does he ponder, standing there
 At midnight dark, and cold, and stilly?—
 That life is but a highway bare—
 Bleak, bitter, desolate, and chilly;
 That while the busy, thoughtless rout
 Rush this way—that way—twenty more ways,
 Poor feeble wretches, falling out,
 Die all unheeded in the doorways.

That Genius oft must 'pad the hoof,'
 While Dulness soars on banknote pinions
 (That—scarce affords to hire a roof,
 This—is the heir of vast dominions);
 That, when a quarrel is begun,
 It is not always Wrong begins it;
 That, when the fight is fought and won,
 It is not always Right that wins it;

That Virtue oft is punished sore,
 And Vice struts off with stars and garters;
 That man by Truth sets little store,
 And Sham can boast a crowd of martyrs;
 Yet that—howe'er our life is cast—
 One solacing, unfailing trust is
 That restitution comes at last—
 The end is God's eternal justice!

And therefore that our steps are led
 When most it seems they're straying blindly!—
 Such thoughts perchance are in his head,
 Sprung of a gentle heart, and kindly.
 That head will throb—that heart will ache
 Its last ere long; and Goldsmith's mourners
 Their tearful way shall hither make
 From twenty different nooks and corners.

For when at length life's tether broke—
 (How many men might wish it their case!)—
 A crowd of simple, loving folk
 Sat sobbing on the gusty staircase:

And Reynolds, Johnson, Burke—the men
 From whom the times their glory borrow—
 Laid by the brush—flung down the pen,
 And wept him with a genuine sorrow.

That was an age of giant wits,
 Who as a child were wont to hold him :
 But now, ' poor Goldy,' where he sits
 Must smile to see how we've enrolled him.
 We crown the heroes of his days,
 But in the midst of them we place him,
 And while to them our hats we raise,
 For him!—our open arms embrace him !

So Goldsmith died :—and with him died
 The pensions of some score retainers,
 For whom he oft himself denied—
 Poor ragged, wretched Drury Laners!
 He died in debt! But left mankind
 The heirs to an abundant treasure,
 The writings of a master mind,
 A genius gifted past all measure !

They say he owed two thousand, quite!
 Yet who about the sum would bicker?
 More than a living was his right,
 Who gave us the immortal Vicar !
 How can we count a price that pays
 For the enchantment that bewitched us?
 How can we worthily appraise
 The lavish fancy that enriched us ?

The sighs and laughter, tears and smiles,
 The which his cunning way to win is—
 His gentle jests, his pleasant wiles,
 All going for two thousand guineas!
 What churl would for their songs begrudge
 Fruit to the blackbirds and the thrushes?
 Goldsmith a debtor! Nay—adjudge
 How much we owe to him—with blushes!

* * * * *

Peace to your ashes, ' little Noll,'
 You ' like an angel ' talk, not write, now.*
 Great men of letters to extol—
 Not satirise you—all unite now.
 Your pen has won a deathless name—
 Your life a tender recollection.
 Let others envy you the fame,
 I'd only ask for the affection !

T. H.

* ' Who wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll.'—*Garrick's Epitaph*.

VISITS IN COUNTRY HOUSES.

No. III.

AFTER having mutually followed their own devices, Mrs. D—— and her son Arthur agreed to meet at Hornby Castle, where the Duke of Broadlands entertained a large party, to celebrate the coming of age of his eldest son, Lord Proudacre.

Hornby Castle well represented the family to whom it had belonged for so many years. It was a stately, turreted castle, which had been built about a century ago, on the site of an old house which, for many generations, had satisfied the more moderate requirements of those who were then lords of the manor of Hornby; for 'Hornby Manor' had not then developed into 'Hornby Castle.' It was left to after generations to form alliances, and accumulate wealth and land, which placed the Duke of Broadlands on a level with the most noble and wealthy. By a marriage with the greatest heiress of her day, and the sole representative of an ancient house, whose alliance had been universally courted for many preceding generations, they took the name of 'Goldust;' and after adding field to field, and enlarging their borders, they pulled down the old house, which had sheltered them and theirs with its ancient respectability for so long a time, and whose walls had resounded with the merry voices of all the children who had grown up under its roof, and built a gorgeous castle, which, as we have already said, well represented the estate of its noble occupiers. It was a handsome building, if turrets and towers, and a huge mass of masonry, covering a considerable area, constitute beauty of any kind. All who appreciate what is genuine, and hate pretension, turned away from it, if not with disgust, at all events with dissatisfaction at there being so little to interest them. It was impossible to help being attracted by its immensity. It overawed the beholder as it stretched itself out along the

valley, occupying, with its stables and outbuildings, which were all built in the same massive and imposing style, with its gardens, and lawns, and pleasure-grounds, a vast extent of land, infinitely greater than any one would suppose from merely looking down upon it from the heights above. Nature had proved herself a kind friend to Hornby Castle, for nothing could surpass the beauty of the park and its surrounding scenery. Wood and water, fern, heather, and gorse, undulating ground, well-wooded hills protecting it from the cruel north winds; and on the southern side an extensive view over a rich and beautifully-wooded country, which melted away into the blue distance of the far horizon. Such a prospect could rarely be seen, and many an eye rested on it in silent pleasure, glad to turn away from the castle itself, which afforded so little interest. All that wealth could accomplish had been done to adorn the castle. Inside and out it told of money, but, great and imposing as it was, it sunk into less than insignificance in the presence of Nature.

Hornby Castle now appeared in its most attractive form; for so large a house, filled as it was throughout, from top to bottom, and in every nook, with a goodly assemblage of persons of all ages, bent upon enjoying themselves, and doing all possible honour to the occasion which called them together, could not fail in affording amusement and pleasure to its guests. It was so large that, when fully inhabited, it seemed almost to contain the population of a small town; and this circumstance in itself was a security for success, because every one was sure to find some congenial society. The young are easily pleased, and ready to find some good in everything. To them every cloud has a silver lining; and nothing is wholly evil in their eyes. But their elders are neither so easily satisfied nor so well disposed.

They are more critical, and more *exigant*—more something which interferes with their enjoyment of life. But at Hornby Castle he must have been very crabbed and hard to please who could not find something pleasant and congenial in the varied society which was now collected in honour of Lord Proudacre's having attained his majority. Mothers with lovely daughters—and of course all mothers think their daughters lovely—were in a flutter of delight, for who could tell that the young millionaire might not be *épris* with one of them? At all events, it was not impossible, and, to many minds, what is not absolutely impossible soon becomes hopeful. It had been a profitable time for the milliners, for no expense was spared by the 'chaperons' to embellish the appearance of their lovely charges. Everything that could set off their wares to the best advantage on so important an occasion was universally voted to be money well spent, which might, possibly, return a high interest. There was that vulgar Lady Chesterford with her daughter, no longer young, but who imagined she possessed the gift of eternal youth, and who always selected the last and most popular *débutante* as her 'dear friend,' as if all the rest were too old to be her companions. She was always, like her mother, dressed in the most *outré* fashion; and it was said, and generally believed, that poor Lord Chesterford, who had nothing but his pension as a retired and now superannuated chancellor, found himself nearly swamped by the costliness and variety of the *toilettes* of his wife and daughter. He was a somewhat prosy man, but could tell a story well; and his everlasting reminiscences obtained for him a certain amount of success. He was one of the Duke of Broadlands' oldest political friends, and they used to retire into remote corners to settle the affairs of the state, which, if the expression of their faces, and the solemnity of their manner might be taken as any indication of its condition, it might be inferred that the country was on the very verge of ruin. Then there

was Lady Caroline Hardy and her daughter, who is one of the beauties of the day, but who, for some inexplicable reason, is not popular. Whether she is dull or ill-tempered it is impossible to say, because opinion is divided, but she has not the success to which her beauty entitles her. Her mother was a celebrated beauty, but not over-wise; and it was always said that her husband was not sorry to die, and used to say, with a *double entendre* in his words, that he had prayed for many years for his release. Mr. and Lady Barbara Bucket and their son and daughter contributed their share to the entertainment of the company at Hornby Castle. She was an ambitious woman, who was always aiming at being the *grande dame* of the county in which she lived. She was a discreet woman, for she never let any one know the inside of her mind. It was possible it had no inside; but if it had she guarded it well, so that no one should look into it. She had an eternal smile, of a peculiar kind, in which the thin upper lip seemed lost in teeth; and say what you would, of sorrow or joy, you were sure to be greeted by the same inexpressive smile. Her sole object in life was to become the reigning queen of Swamphshire. Her husband was a man who lived upon the news he gleaned from other men, and he had a peculiar way of creeping up to people who were engaged in conversation, that he might learn the subject of it. His thirst for information was unbounded, and he was generally known as 'the Swamphshire Investigator.' He would have made an admirable reporter had his lot in life been cast differently. As it was, he was always welcomed by those who live upon other people's affairs, and room was always made for him in certain coteries of tea-drinking elderly women, who invariably greeted him by saying, 'Ah, here's Mr. Bucket; he is sure to know all about it. He will tell us. Oh, Mr. Bucket, we are so glad to see you. Have you heard whether it is true that Lady Jones called her husband Sir Henry an old fool,

because he lost thirty shillings at whist to Sir Ralph Gambler? And do you know whether it is true that Lord and Lady Goosey are going to be separated because they are already tired of each other? You are sure to know, because you know everything.' Then Mr. Bucket would twiddle his watch-key, and would say that he 'did not know, but had heard,' &c. All these people furnished a fund of amusement to those who appreciated their propensities, or liked to play them off for the entertainment of others.

Mrs. D—— and her son were such pleasant, cheery, and unpretentious people that they were always well received; besides which they were so pleasant to themselves and one another, that they were, without any effort on their part, agreeable company generally. Mrs. D——, who had a natural gift for private theatricals, was in great request; and as she loved burnt cork, foot-lights, and everything connected with the stage, she was in her element at once, ready to give a helping hand wherever it was wanted. She could improvise a dress out of very scanty materials, and could compose the most successful prologue on the shortest notice. She could arrange a tableau with true artistic skill; and as tableaux and private theatricals were a part of the programme of the festivities, she was in hourly requisition—the referee on all disputed points, who could, with her consummate tact, make people do exactly what they were required to do. She and her son Arthur, in the meanwhile, entertained themselves each day by comparing notes, and commenting on the events as they occurred; and the daily reunions between mother and son were the best commentary of the proceedings which took place on the momentous occasion of Lord Proudacre's attaining his majority.

Not only in the immediate neighbourhood of Hornby Castle, but throughout the length and breadth of the county of Tuftunshire the Duke of Broadlands was held in great awe and respect. His word was law; his disapproval a grave

calamity. Surrounded by small squires and self-important clergy, he reigned like a king over the whole county; and they who were so fortunate as to be admitted within the gracious precincts of Hornby Castle, and into the Duke's confidence, were the envy of all their neighbours, and themselves elated at the notice that was taken of them. It was quite a tradition in the county that the mind of his Grace, on all local politics, should be taken before any one would venture to move in any matter; and when, on a certain memorable occasion, one of the squires of Tuftunshire presumed to have an opinion of his own, and to endeavour to maintain it against the Duke of Broadlands, the whole of that deferential county was aghast at his presumption, and was in haste to propitiate the favour of the Duke, and assure him that it was but an isolated instance of a man daring to think for himself. The clergy and the gentry were, in fact, more or less dependents of the great man. They who were in favour were flattered by it to their very bent, and they who were not lived on hoping, even against hope, that their turn might come some day. The submissiveness and deference of these good people, their anxiety to propitiate the rising sun, and to do all honour to the Goldust family, was a source of great amusement to Mrs. D—— and her son, who commented on the flunkeyism of these country folk in no measured terms.

'Mother,' said Arthur D—— one day, as he sat in Mrs. D——'s room, in the interval before dressing-time, talking over the events of the day, and canvassing the various guests who had arrived,—'Mother, did you see what a fix that poor Mr. Luvtin was in when the "great man" called on him to repeat what he was saying to that young liberal, Harry Phree-think? How he stammered and spluttered; and how sold he was when Harry, enjoying the fun, said that Mr. Luvtin was agreeing with him in thinking that there should be an extension of the franchise, but that they had only as yet agreed

that a bill should be introduced, but had not settled the details.'

'Oh! that was it, then, that made the Duke give one of his ominous "Ah's!"'

'Yes; and did you see how it shut up poor old Luvtin? I pitied the man. He won't sleep a wink while he is in the house, because he will feel he has regularly put his foot into it. How I did enjoy it, though!'

'It was a shame, though, my dear Arthur, of your friend Harry to make so much mischief.'

'Mischief, mother! why, bless you, it will blow over in no time.'

'Never, Arthur. The Duke never allows the clergy to think for themselves. Besides, if I mistake not, Mr. Luvtin has one of the Duke's livings.'

Arthur gave no reply, save a prolonged whistle.

'What are you going to do, mother, about that young Raffles? He'll never know his part, and he is such an awful stick. In that love scene with Eva Roberts (by Jove, mother, what a pretty girl she is!) he provokes me out of all patience.'

'No doubt, my boy; I can well believe it. Would you like to take his place?'

'Nonsense! I don't mean that. I am not such a fool as that. Why, the girl has not a penny, mother.'

'I admire your philosophy, Arthur; and, after all, "her face is her fortune," as the old song says.'

'I want to ask you, mother, who is that Doctor Medlar, that seems to be such an authority in arranging some of the tableaux?'

'I cannot tell, except that he is a great friend of the Duchess's—her own pet doctor that she swears by, and who seems to have the run of the house.'

'I hate the man!'

'So do I.'

'Did you see how he took hold of Emily Fitzgibbon's chin, and said, "A little more this way, if you please—a *little* more still. Thank you; that will do. Now the head a little thrown back; thank you. Allow me," and again the fellow took hold of her chin to arrange

her pose as he liked. I had no patience with him.'

'And how did Emily Fitzgibbon like it?'

'Like it! She looked as if she could have knocked him down. Did you hear that after it was over she went up to Lady Lavinia Goldust, and said she must decline taking any further part in the tableaux?'

'No; did she though! I wonder whether that is really true, because Lord Proudsacre seems rather taken with her, and I don't somehow think she would like to affront them.'

'Perhaps not; but I can tell you she was awfully put out; and when that little doctor came forward afterwards, to assure her that it was the best tableau of the evening, she scarcely vouchsafed him any reply, but gave him a look expressive of ineffable contempt. I think it was, after all, your fault, mother.'

'Mine! How could it be mine? What could I have to do with that man?'

'You could have prevented his interfering.'

'Lady Lavinia and her mother assigned to us our proper places, and, as you know, I am mistress of the robes, and have to arrange all about the dresses. I am the genius that presides over calico, cotton, velvet, and the rouge-pot. But there goes the dressing-bell, and if you don't hurry off I shall not be in time for dinner, and shall again offend against the laws of Hornby Castle, of which punctuality is one.'

'I say, mother, what a pompous, stiff old prig he is.'

'Yes; but a most kindhearted man. I have known him do the most generous acts, in spite of his character for stint and screw.'

'Well, I must be off, else I shall offend his mightiness.'

Every day they sat down fifty to dinner. There was a magnificent state dining-room, capable of accommodating a vast number, and even this large party was not out of proportion to it. It was built of stone, with richly groined roof, and handsome oak panelling occupied one-third of the walls. A huge fireplace

and richly-carved stone chimney-piece filled up the centre of the room, reaching almost up to the ceiling; while a large oriel window opposite the fireplace, and another of the same character, only larger still, at right angles to it, added to its appearance. It was one of those rooms which strike the beholder with awe. It required numbers to be able to grapple with its oppressive magnificence, and a smaller party would have been silenced by it. As it was, the room resounded with the sound of merry voices, and there was no lull in the laughter and merriment that prevailed. The first day the Duke of Broadlands seemed bewildered by the unwonted sounds, and, had he dared, would have been tempted to read the Riot Act; but his astonishment gave way before the resolute determination of every one to enjoy himself, and he was carried away by the strong current, and found himself at last taking part in the surrounding revelry.

As the Duchess left the dining-room, she went up to the Duke and begged him not to remain there long, as so much had to be done in the way of entertainment for the large company of neighbours who were expected to arrive for the *tableaux* and ball which was to succeed them.

The tenantry had been already regaled in the most sumptuous manner. The preceding day, which was the important one in Lord Proudacre's life, had been devoted to feasting the tenants and the poor on the estate. Each poor family had beef and bread, plum-pudding and beer, and a week's wages; and every cottage bore ample testimony to the unwonted generosity and liberality of the Duke of Broadlands. The tenants had been assembled in a large iron room which had been erected for the occasion, and all the company at the Castle dined with them, and it was generally voted to have been great fun. The Duke relaxed somewhat from his wonted dignity of manner, and actually condescended to some playful witticisms in his intercourse with his tenants. Lord Proudacre

acquitted himself more than creditably; and there were some who were malicious enough to say that there were indications of his views becoming more liberal than any which had hitherto prevailed at Hornby Castle—a suspicion which never entered the Duke's head, happily both for himself and Lord Proudacre; for if such an idea had suggested itself to him as a possibility, it must have led to distrust and estrangement, as the Duke looked upon political consistency as the greatest of moral virtues, and would have preferred any *esclandre* to the abandonment of the family tradition.

No sooner had the gentlemen left the dining-room, than Mrs. D— was hurried off to her green-room, where, with rouge-pot, paint, and powder, she was soon busily employed in putting the finishing touches to those who were to figure in the *tableaux*. Dr. Medlar was busy on the stage, in front of which a large gold frame was fastened, across the inside of which some crape had been strained. But the little doctor was the presiding genius, giving offence to all save the Duchess, who could see no fault in her 'dear Doctor Medlar.' He was a little man, with bright eyes, a hook-nose, and brilliant complexion; not unlike a Jew, very unlike a gentleman, with effeminate, would-be-insinuating manners. Mrs. D— was referred to very often, because the spirit of rebellion against the doctor was very general, and none of the ladies, young or old, liked to be twisted and twirled about at his pleasure, as if they were nothing better than lay figures.

There was the scene between Jeanie and Effie Deans in prison; between Sir Henry Lee and Alice, where she kneels at his feet, while he sat in a wicker arm-chair, listening to a respectable old man whose dilapidated dress showed something of the clerical habit; and another in which the Fair Maid of Perth listens, in an attitude of devout attention, to the instructions of a Carthusian monk. But one of the happiest of all was a Dutch picture, in which a family group was represented, some engaged in needle-

work, others playing at cards, while some younger ones played with their toys on the floor, as their elders slept soundly in their arm-chairs, with half-emptied glasses by their side. The grouping, the varied dresses, all the accessories told so well that it took every one by surprise, and elicited the most enthusiastic applause. After these were over, they adjourned to the drawing-rooms, and then reassembled in the saloon, where dancing was kept up until a late hour.

The next morning, Arthur D— felt disinclined to join the party in the racket-court, and, yawning from sheer fatigue (for he had been in great request for the tableaux, and was an inveterate dancer), he sauntered leisurely into his mother's room, saying—

'Well, mother, will you bet? Is Prondacre going to marry Emily Fitzgibbon?'

'Marry Emily Fitzgibbon!—not he. Why, no Goldust ever married a Whig. The Duke would die of it.'

'But, mother, fellows sometimes think for themselves on such matters.'

'Perhaps so: but that will never be. I should pity her if that were to take place, for she would not have a comfortable berth of it.'

'Why so?'

'Because the Duke takes upon himself the responsibility of thinking for all his family, and he would never forgive the intrusion of such thorough Whig blood into his house.'

'Is he such a bigot in politics?'

'Yes, indeed; in politics, in religion, in everything. Don't you see in what awe he is held by all the county-people?—how they bow and scrape when they come within a hundred yards of him?'

'By-the-by, did you see what a fright young Snobere was in, when he nearly knocked his Grace over as he was waltzing with that gay Mrs. Neardowell? He stammered his apologies as if his last hope of heaven was on the very verge of being lost. He was in such an awful fright.'

'Who is it you are speaking of, Arthur? Is it that round, chubby-

faced youth who asked you, when you were in the green-room, what sort of tap they kept at Hornby Castle?'

'Yes, mother, the same. He was the fellow you padded so nicely for the sleepy Dutchman in the "Family Group."'

'I remember; and who has been making such violent love to Blanche Oxenford.'

'Exactly; whenever, at least, Mrs. Neardowell will let him.'

'By-the-by, Arthur, who is that Mrs. Neardowell? She is very pretty; but rather dangerous, isn't she?'

'Well, there are all sorts of stories about her. Someday she is a widow; others that she is a *divorcée*.'

'What? a *divorcée* at Hornby Castle! Why, the very walls would fall upon us if such a thing were even suspected. But what is she?'

'I cannot tell: I have been trying to find out. She came with those Merewethers that the Duke was so civil to.'

'And she is determined to take our fat Dutchman by storm; and he, foolish fellow! is flattered by it. Arthur, you men are silly fellows.'

'Because, dear mother, you women are so pleasant. Isn't that it?'

'I don't know why it is; only that there is no man that a clever woman cannot make a fool of. You remember Samson?'

Arthur looked grave, and then asked his mother when she intended to leave Hornby Castle.

'I am rather tired of all this row. Cannot we take a small cottage somewhere, and rusticate a little while? I don't care where it is. We might get down some books from Mudie's, and read and be quiet; for it seems to me that, wherever one visits in the country, one is sure to find as much row and racket as there is in London, with fewer opportunities of escaping from it and of doing what one likes.'

'But, my dear Arthur, you are quite *blasé*. What does it all mean? You did not suppose that, when we came here for this special occasion, we should find the house empty, or do nothing but twiddle finger and thumb from morning to night. I

was here once, some years ago, when there was scarcely any one here but ourselves, and I never shall forget the pompous solemnity of it all. Oh, no! take my word for it that Hornby Castle is only bearable when there is what you call a "row" going on.'

'Ah, my dear mother, you are so fond of society.'

'Fond of my own kind? Yes, and so will you be when you are as old as I am. It is only the young who think it a happiness to sit at home and live upon themselves.'

'Not at all: I do not wish for that. But just remember where we have been. You found row and racket at the Garringtons; I found the same at Garzington. And then at Filey with the Splashfords, and at Danesford with the Neverests; and now here there is not a moment's quiet. Morning, noon, and night the top is made to spin.'

'But you were not any more contented with your life in the Highlands.'

'No; but that was for a different reason: because there was no guiding hand to direct and arrange what was to be done.'

'My dear boy, you are, like the rest of your sex, never contented.'

'Indeed, no. I am not discontented; but I own that I like to sit here with you, and——'

'Grumble.'

'No, mother; you are wrong.'

'What, then, do you call it? and why should you be so weary? I can remember when you never could have enough of it; when I had to run after Lady This, and Mrs. That,

to get invitations for you, and spent a fortune in note-paper to get you into all the row and racket you now profess to dislike.'

'Well, mother, it was so; and I suppose that I have had enough of it. "All work, and no play, makes Jack a dull boy;" but I suspect, all play would make him very sick. But tell me—was it like this in your day, when you were quite young?'

'I am amused at the delicate way in which you say *quite* young, as if you wished to let me down easy. No; things were very different in my young days. We used to pay longer visits than are now paid, and visited at fewer houses. Travelling was a more difficult and expensive affair. We had more friends and fewer acquaintances then. Now the tables are turned, and friendships are comparatively rare. It is all owing to the facility of travelling, which has made us more restless, and more dependent upon excitement.'

Mrs. D—— was not far wrong. Steam has set society in motion; and go where we will, we find everything in a state of progress. It is only in such places as Hornby Castle, weighted as it is by the pompous old Duke of Broadlands, that things seem to stand still; and yet even there, as we have lately seen, circumstances have proved too strong for him; and Hornby Castle will live in Arthur D——'s memory as a place in which there was as little quiet as could be found in other places which are avowedly given up to pleasure.



THE LAST RUN WITH THE HARRIERS.

IT was the very day after last Christmas, when all England had a bilious headache, and Napoleon, had he but known the proper time, might have come over, landed, conquered, and dictated a new *coup d'état* from Windsor Castle, that Mr. Samuel Felix found himself the possessor of 4000*l.* a year. I saw it in his face. Hitherto, it must be said, Mr. Felix had never been an interesting person. He had a poor wit. He had neither a good wine-cellar nor a pretty sister, and how therefore was he to win the respect of his fellow men? But on this morning his dull, dry countenance underwent a sort of transfiguration. When he told me of his good fortune he became quite lovely in my eyes: he was no more plain Mr. Felix, of Great Tower Street, but a noble and handsome gentleman, whom any one might be proud to know.

With a gushing generosity of confidence he flew into a recital of what he was about to do with his newly-discovered treasure. He would buy a house in Kent; he would go off to a wine-merchant's that very day; he would take in 'The Field;' he would purchase a stud, but would begin by buying a first-rate hunter. Now there is nothing in which an unwary man may be so easily swindled as in buying a horse, and so, out of pure good-nature, I sold him one of mine.

Mr. Felix assumed the rôle of a country gentleman with a charming dexterity; but pressure of legal business and other matters prevented his going out with the hounds so soon as he would have wished. Towards the end of last month, however, I received intimation that I might send down the horse I had sold him, for that he meant to go out with Lord Switchem's harriers the last day of the season; and could I get myself another mount, he asked, and remain over night at the Beeches? Now as I had invested the money paid me by Mr. Felix for my former horse in the purchase of another a trifle better—perhaps one might say

a good deal better—there was no difficulty about the mount; and so, at an early hour on that fresh March morning, I rode past Mr. Felix's lodge and up to the hall-door of the Beeches. My friend showed me over the house with a graceful and blushing modesty, for as yet he was not quite accustomed to the grandeur of the place, and at ten o'clock the horses were ordered to be brought round.

The meet was at half-past ten. Mr. Felix, with a bran-new whip in his hand, went out to look at the hunter, and pretended to regard him with a calmly critical air.

'Good long pastern,' he said, with a judicious nod of approval.

Bobby turned round, with that big, black, full eye of his, to look at his new master, and it seemed to me then that my friend was a little nervous. He went forward and patted the animal's neck, and called him a poor old man and a good old man, while the groom stood by, evidently wondering at the delay. Mr. Felix looked all over the horse again; he again patted his horse's neck and addressed him as 'poor old Bobby;' then he discovered something wrong with the handle of his whip.

A thought struck me. Had Mr. Felix never ridden before? or was I to be the innocent cause of his death? He began to caress the animal in quite a hysterical way, with a vain effort to conceal his agitation. Perhaps, too, I thought, Mr. Felix had not made his will, and at this moment Mrs. Felix, a rosy little lady, came to the window to smile a farewell to her lord. *A farewell!* I turned away: I dared not look that simple creature in the face.

But at length he managed to struggle into the saddle, and away we rode. Over the hill and down again, and lo! before us, far over the fresh green plain, were a number of minute dark specks that moved hither and thither in the yellow mist of sunshine. As we drew nearer the mass of riders increased; we saw the whip flourishing his

white leather thong, and keeping guard over that straying cluster of speckled dogs which, in despite of him, would sniff about the common, to the amazement of certain long-necked snowy geese. The sight inspired Mr. Felix. He seemed to forget the uncomfortable bobbing in the saddle which he was enduring. He became quite radiant and enthusiastic.

'What a morning!' he cried, with an incautious flourish of his whip, which made Bobby swerve, to my friend's evident terror. 'Look at the light along these hills! And the hedges, how green they are! By Jove! I believe I could smell these wild flowers half a mile off. See! that is Lord Switchem, he with the green coat, on the roan. And there are his two daughters, in front of that old squire. Isn't the youngest a splendid-looking gell—full, fine-blown, pink English face, such as you see in magazines, you know; and how she sits her horse, to be sure! And do you think this old Bobby 'll go well?'

My friend's garrulous simplicity was making him forgetful. Bobby threw up his head at a bit of newspaper lying in the road, and, but for a lucky snatch at the mane, Mr. Felix would have been in the road also. As he shoved himself back in his saddle, he threw a hasty glance towards the ladies to see if they had witnessed the mishap—the ridiculous old fop that he was.

Brisk and lively indeed was the scene in front of the inn—gentlemen dismounting from their dog-carts; two or three rather fresh horses prancing on their hind legs and spattering about the turf of the common; the master saluting his friends as they arrived; the ladies walking their horses up and down to show the full sweep of their gored skirts; one or two thirsty or timorous riders passing into the inn for a thimbleful of 'jumping-powder'; the whip flicking at this or that stray hound which had so little self-respect as to claim acquaintance with a ragged and forlorn-looking cur that had come out to see the show. Mr. Felix rode up to shake hands with Lord Switchem, the tall,

thin, spare man with the keen grey eye and eagle beak. His lordship made a little joke, and Mr. Felix in vain attempted to smile, his face being filled with alarm at a certain friskiness which Bobby was beginning to exhibit. My friend then lifted his hat in a graceful manner to the two ladies, and came back in happy unconsciousness of the singular appearance of his elbows and legs.

Then away we went up the nearest lane, the whip still keeping in sore restraint these dappled heads and flickering sterna, until the master abruptly rode his horse up a bank on the left, the dogs following him into a long undulating turnip-field. When we were all in the field I noticed that on Mr. Felix's face there dwelt a singular solemnity. Presently he rode over to me and said—

'If I see a hare what must I do?'

'Keep with the hounds, and they'll see her as soon as you will. And mind, if you ride down any of the dogs, Lord Switchem may perhaps use discourteous language.'

I lost sight of Mr. Felix then; but in a few moments I had my attention recalled to him by hearing an unearthly halloo.

'There she goes!' he shrieked, pointing to a rabbit which one of the dogs, having unearthed, seemed inclined to follow.

The pack wheeled round in obedience to the cry, and doubtless he thought he had done something fine, when a frightful torrent of execration was heard, and Lord Switchem, in a furious passion, rode by. The whip, too, quite as incensed, but only grumbling the oaths his master uttered, rode at the hound which had led astray the others, and, coming down with the full force of his arm, curled the lithe leather thong round her body. Then there was a yell.

'Why, what do you mean?' cried Felix, shocked at such cruelty.

'Didn't you see it was a rabbit? and you set the whole pack astray,' said another rider, in accents of bitter scorn, the whip being too angry, or too prudent, to reply.

'It was the dog's fault, not mine,' grumbled Felix to me; but there

was a great blush of shame on his face, and he willingly fell to the rear.

The dogs, having been recalled to their duty, began to scour the field once more, and in a very few moments they simultaneously lifted up their voice and sent forth the joyful cry. Moved by a sudden instinct, the hounds closed into a dense compact body, and darted off with that sharp, plaintive howl. Here and there a horse, grown instantaneously mad with the piping of the shrill music, carried his rider headlong down the slope at a pace which was certainly uncomfortable over the superterranean turnips; while the hare, running almost in a straight line, crossed the road at the foot of the incline and went straight up the opposite hill. Here I lost sight of Mr. Felix. There was a nasty bit of hedge at the foot of the turnip-field, which the two ladies took beautifully; but I knew that Mr. Felix, if he had the least regard for his wife, and if Bobby would allow him, would find some other method of egress.

And how well the dogs ran! You could have covered them with a blanket, as the sporting correspondents say. But the hare, having been headed, doubled round the hill and made for the road again, not a few laggard riders profiting by her resolution. Now where was Mr. Felix? Neither he nor Bobby was within sight, and surely there had been nothing to prevent his at least gaining upon the dogs on their return. On reaching the road the pack suddenly found themselves at fault; the hare having taken a sharp turn to the right, they had overrun the scent, but immediately spreading themselves out, they worked about both hedges, their noses to the ground and their white sterns wagging in and out the thick briars, while the whip kept keen watch for the first recovery of the trail. And, as it happened, a certain Beesy again gave tongue, receiving the warm commendation of her master as she led her companions off in pursuit.

The hare had evidently made for the turnip-field where we had first found her; and just as the hounds, in full cry, were struggling up the

bank and leaping the hedge, what should jump clean into the road but Bobby!

He was riderless. There was a little titter of laughter among the men, for presently Mr. Felix walked up to the hedge and looked over.

'Make him jump back,' said he, piteously, seeing that the other riders were now half way up the turnip-field.

'Come along, and take your horse.'

'I can't,' he said, apparently almost ready to cry; 'I shall lose the place where my whip dropped; I am sure it was here. And I shan't try to ride again over these turnips.'

'Are you going home, then?'

He quietly disappeared, leaving me in charge of Bobby. Suddenly, however, I heard a shout from him.

'Oh! by Jove, here they come—straight down on me—what am I to do?'

The cry of the hounds was coming nearer and still nearer, until, a few feet on the other side of the hedge, there rose the shrill squeak! squeak! of the hare being killed. I left Bobby to his fate, and rode up the bank and through the nearest gap. Here a pretty picture presented itself. Mr. Felix, half-dead with terror, and not daring to move lest the maddened dogs should fly at him, was standing and looking at them worrying the hare from mouth to mouth, while Lord Switchem, riding down the hill, and followed by the whole field, was shouting to him to seize the killed hare from the hounds. Indeed, by the time I had rescued the bleeding carcase there was little need for the master to cut it open.

'Shall we send the hare round to your house, Mr. Felix?' said Lord Switchem, pleasantly, while there was a great burst of laughter from the 'field;' and, indeed, a more pitiable object than my friend, standing there among the hounds, it was not often their lot to see.

'Why didn't you tell me what I ought to have done?' said Felix, quite savagely, as he caught Bobby, and mounted. 'You don't expect that one learns to hunt hares in Cheapside?'

It was useless to point out the fact that I had never undertaken to be his preceptor in these matters, for now every one was hastening to overtake the hounds, which were already drawing a low piece of meadow some five hundred yards off. Before we could reach the ground the hounds were in cry; but as the hare went straight away over several tracts of meadow land, we were ere long up with the crowd. She led the dogs down to a long, low clump of alders lying beside a broad but not very deep stream, and here the scent was lost. There ensued five minutes of painful uncertainty. Part of the field kept hovering about the corner of the meadow, the others crossed the stream by a ford and struggled through the alders to the opposite corner of the cover. Now, Lord Switchem was in the former group, and we distinctly saw him pass, without recognition, a tall, fair-moustachioed young gentleman who stood by a stile, a shot-belt over his shoulder, a gun in his hand, and a large brown retriever at his feet. Not dreaming that we were likely to intrude upon a private conversation, Mr. Felix and I rode up to reconnoitre the ford, and, in doing so, found that we were closely followed by Lord Switchem's youngest daughter, who, drawing near to the young gentleman who was leaning against the stile, said rapidly to him—

'Und gehst du heute Abend fort?'

'Ja wohl, Liebeschen,' said this person, in an under tone; 'komme aber um neun Uhr.'

'Hier?'

He nodded in reply, and she turned to look after her sister, as though she had been diligently observing the water.

'I say,' said Felix, 'what did that fellow say to her just now?'

'He remarked that elderly gentlemen had no business to pry into lovers' secrets.'

'That's your fun,' said Felix, with a sneer; 'but hark! there go the dogs again; and see! they're making across the field yonder.'

So there was nothing for it but a simultaneous rush to the ford. The younger lady, gracefully lifting up

the skirt of her habit, and not even looking at the young gentleman, urged her horse into the stream, notwithstanding that it tried to stand and paw the water with its forefoot.

'Now, Mr. Felix,' said some one, 'come along.'

But a slight cry escaped the lips of my friend, and, turning, I just caught sight of him slipping off the saddle, as Bobby, right in the middle of the stream, began to rear up on his hind legs. The next moment Mr. Felix was in the water, whence he emerged puffing and snorting like a hippopotamus; while Bobby, tempted by the current, was rapidly making his way down the bed of the river. With two or three furious plunges Felix succeeded in overtaking him and laying hold of the bridle.

'You ought to be ashamed of yourself,' he cried, in a magnificent rage, 'sitting laughing there, when it is all owing to your having sold me a horse which no one could ride. Perhaps you think it fun. I don't; and in the City we would call the transaction by a harder name.'

'My dear sir,' I observed, 'I did not bargain to teach you riding, as well as give you a horse, for sixty guineas; and as you don't seem to want my looking after you, I'll bid you good-day.'

'Oh! I say,' cried Mr. Felix, in despair, 'wait a minute! Wouldn't I do as much for you? You've no more conscience than a wild bear; and it is all owing to your con-founded horse.'

Unfortunately, when he did manage to lay hold of the bridle, there was no place on either side of the stream for him to land, and he was therefore under the necessity of walking against the current, Bobby very unwillingly following. I soon discovered that my friend's tone of plaintive entreaty was but a guise; for so soon as he was again mounted he began 'ragging' as before.

'Serves me right for buying a horse without having tried him first. I dare say you fellows think it rather fine to palm off a vicious horse. Hem! I don't. Men of principle don't. And now, you see,

they're all away before us: and I've made myself ridiculous before the whole field.'

'There I quite agree with you.'

'Do you? Do you mean to say that one man of the lot could ride this horse?'

'Why, a baby could ride him.'

'But I'm not a baby: and now I suppose, as they're two or three miles away, we had better go home.'

Mr. Felix was interrupted by the long, yelping whine of the dogs, which were clearly coming down again to the alders, and two minutes thereafter—we standing in perfect stillness—the hare leaped from a low bank and took the water gallantly. Louder and louder grew the cry of the hounds in the resonant wood, nearer and nearer came the sound of crackling branches and trampled leaves, and now the hare had just reached the opposite bank.

'Oh! by Jove, she'll escape!' shouted Felix, as, oblivious of consequences, he spurred Bobby forward and made a great cut at the hare with his long whip.

'Hold hard!' I yelled to him; and the next moment the dogs had simultaneously dashed into the water, spluttered or swam across, and were up the opposite bank and through the dried, white rushes. The hare took to the open, the dogs some thirty yards behind, and 'Now,' I cried to Felix, 'there is a chance for you.'

We were several seconds in advance of the others, who were as yet struggling through the swamp to reach the ford, and Mr. Felix fairly laughed out with pleasure. How he managed to stick on I know not; for Bobby, warming to the work, was determined to have a run, whether with a rider or without. 'Hurrah!' shouted Felix, as he gallantly leaped a small drain about two feet wide, and again urged on his mad career. Several of the others had now overtaken him, however, and pretty much in a line they were approaching a ditch which was broad enough and deep enough to make several of the older hands look out for a safe place. The younger of the two ladies was

the first to make the attempt, and her horse refused.

'Shall I give you a lead?' said Felix, who was close behind her.

Was he suddenly grown insane? Had the dip in the river, and the subsequent reaction, produced a fever? Whether he shut his eyes or not I cannot say; but he rode full tilt at the ditch. Bobby landed with his fore-feet well planted, but his hind-feet slipped in the soft mud, and my friend went straight as an arrow over his head, turned a somersault, and found himself lying in the field on his back. Felix got up, looked about him for a second in a bewildered manner, and the next second was again in the saddle. Had he been less dazed, he would have noticed, on rising, that two of his fellow-creatures had similarly come to grief, and that a smaller boy, who had been riding a small pony, was just then creeping out of the water like a half-drowned rat.

The hounds having overrun the scent near the border of a small plantation allowed the riders to gather together again.

'I was not the only one,' said Felix, coming proudly up.

'How the only one?'

'There were several tumbled off, and I was the first to get mounted again,' he said, with a fine enthusiasm mantling in his cheek; 'and, I say, this horse you sold me goes wonderfully. He's a perfect jewel. You know I don't feel quite at home on a horse while he's trotting; but in full gallop I sit as easily as in an arm-chair; and you just see when we get a good run again!'

Mr. Felix was certainly in a state of considerable excitement. It was clear to me that he was quite forgetful of Mrs. Felix—*venator teneræ conjugis immemor*—and determined, irrespective of results, to signalise himself in the last run of the season. Not to speak of Lord Switchem—whose acquaintance he had succeeded with considerable difficulty in making—there were the whole of his neighbours whom he wished to impress with a sense of his equestrian proficiency; and it is hard to say how much a man will risk in endeavouring to prove him-

self a grand cavalier. Mr. Felix kept flourishing his hunting-whip; he patted Bobby's neck and spoke to him encouragingly; he began to talk scientifically about the state of the weather being adverse to the lying of the scent. One would have thought that Mr. Felix had become a 'thistle-whipper' immediately on leaving his cradle.

The hounds at length started another hare, and were presently in full cry after her across the meadows. Mr. Felix was now determined to show fight. His misfortune at the ditch having terminated without breakage of bone was only an additional incentive, and Bobby very soon replied to his admonitions of whip and spur by putting on full steam. Away they went, over the fine level ground, until it seemed to me that Bobby was exercising his own choice of speed and path somewhat markedly. Away they went, by stream, and ditch, and field, while Mr. Felix, ahead of all his companions, was close upon the hounds. It was a beautiful run. If my friend had purposely come out to astonish his bucolic acquaintances with the spirit of a City man, he could not have led off more brilliantly, everything being in his favour. At the same time it must be confessed that Mr. Felix, leaning back in the saddle, seemed making futile but vigorous efforts to restrain his steed, though the distance he speedily put between himself and me soon prevented the possibility of my judging.

The dogs were now going down hill, Mr. Felix being far ahead of the rest of the field. I caught a glimpse of the speckled heads and legs struggling through or jumping over a low quickset hedge, and at the same moment saw Bobby rise high into the air. The next moment the whole disappeared; there

was a shrill shriek above the cry of the dogs; that cry ceased, and there was nothing heard but the clattering of hoofs on the damp meadow land.

And what was this next sound? Surely it could not be Lord Switchem who was using such horrible language, denouncing Mr. Felix, and himself, and everybody and everything in terms which might have made a prizefighter turn pale.

As I arrived at the hedge and looked over, a singular tableau was spread out before me. Mr. Felix was on foot, disconsolately wiping the mud off his new coat; Bobby was half a mile off, at full gallop; Lord Switchem's favourite hound, Bessy, lay dead on the bank; and his lordship was in a passion which made his thin, dry face as hot as fire. Let me draw a veil over that sad consummation of the day's sport: the hare had been killed and the field were willing to return home.

When Bobby had been caught and restored to his rider, Mr. Felix observed to me—

'I consider Lord Switchem a most ungentlemanly man. I say he is no gentleman. But let him rave as he likes; it is the last day of the season, and what should I care? I will avoid, however, for the future, one who has as little command over his tongue as over his temper.'

When Mr. Felix returned home he was quite triumphant in his tone. He informed the rosy little lady that they had killed two hares, and that he had witnessed the death of both. Mrs. Felix was quite charmed with this new proof of the grandeur and power of her husband.

'And that horse of yours,' said Felix, 'is quite a trump. And, I say, which champagne do you prefer—Clioquot, or Collin, or Most?'

W. B.



PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES.

CHAPTER XIII

WEAVING THE SPELL.

PASTORAL pleasures have been sung in every key, and when circumstances render it desirable that we should leave London, it is wise and well to remember that 'God made the country, and man the town.' The greenwood glade, and the rippling river, the dark purple moor, and the sky undefiled by smoke, the peace, the purity, and the other privileges of the rural districts, have a good deal in them for which we ought to be grateful. But there is a reverse to the shield. It may do intelligent human beings good to be socially 'desolate' at times. It does do them good indeed, for it throws them back upon themselves, and obliges them to assiduously cultivate their own best for distraction's sake. But it does not improve them to be 'dumb' because they cannot without intermission 'speak in the congregation of fools.'

Haldon Hall stood well in the midst of what was generally designated a 'very good neighbourhood.' A fair number of county families had centuries ago been planted in the soil surrounding the Heldon acres—had taken root in the same, and in some instances had flourished exceedingly. Additionally there were scattered about several more or less favourable specimens of 'new men' who had in some way or other set their mark upon the times in a remunerative way. Moreover, in several instances the clerical office was filled by scholarly divines—men who had an apt Greek quotation to utter on every subject that was mentioned before them, but who for all that were only one shade less dull than devout.

Notwithstanding all these advantages, it may as well be acknowledged at once that it was a dull neighbourhood—a neighbourhood that was by no means wax to receive new impressions, however

much it might resemble marble in its power of retaining them. It had never cordially approved of Mr. Bathurst's long-continued unbroken absence. It could not cordially approve of his presence now 'under the circumstances.'

The 'circumstances' which were a stumbling-block in Mr. Bathurst's path to instantaneous popularity were Blanche Lyon and Beatrix Talbot, and his open devotion to the pair—devotion that was shown so gladly, frankly, and impartially, that Blanche quickly came to take it as much for granted as she did the sunshine, and Trixy to feel alternately gladdened and saddened by it as she had never been before by anything.

From the hour of Edgar Talbot's first appearance at Haldon it had been apparent to some of them that all was not well with him. He could not concentrate himself upon the present, casting all business cares behind him, as entirely as was to be expected, considering he had been the mainspring of the move they had made into the country. The holiday for which he had so wearily sighed was evidently little more than an empty period in which he had a freer opportunity for the indulgence of undisturbed anxious thought than was his portion to have in London. Those who thought of him at all in the first days of the Arcadian intoxication which made them find the mere act of living all-sufficient, felt that 'a vague unrest, and a nameless longing filled his breast.' But even they did not stay to question the cause of it. Beatrix was sorry for him, but was not sufficiently intimate with her eldest brother to tell him that she was so. She was sorry that he alone of the party should be drawn in by some stern secret necessity from the lawn and the river and the wreathing roses of June, to answer letters



Drawn by W. Small.]

A PASTORAL EPISODE.

See "Playing for High Stakes."

which had arrived during breakfast and spoilt the same for him. 'For all the good Talbot gets out of all this he might as well be listening to the last quotations in the City,' Frank Bathurst said one morning, as, together with Lionel and the two girls, he sat on the bank of the lake. They had left Mr. Talbot in the library writing quickly and nervously, and there had been that in his manner of replying to their solicitations that he would 'come out and do nothing with them all the morning,' which showed that his correspondence was of very genuine interest and importance to him.

'For my part, I believe Mr. Talbot enjoys it quite as much as we do,' Blanche Lyon said, smiling. 'The sun and the scent of the roses both manage to get in at the window, so he can enjoy them, and make money, and despise us for wasting time simultaneously.'

'And they are three pure and undeniable sources of pleasure; let us all count up our joys, and see if we are in a position to pity him for not being "one of us,"' Frank Bathurst replied.

'There shall be no reserves; we must set down each item of pleasure fairly. I wonder if we can do it!' Blanche said, with a blush beginning to rise on her face. 'You commence, Miss Talbot.'

Trixy shook her head. 'No! what moral is there in being fair? What is the use of trying to analyse happiness? We can't do it—no one can do it; can we, Lionel?'

'Any how we can try,' Frank Bathurst interrupted before Lionel could reply, and Blanche encouraged him by saying,

'Hear the laughing philosopher! I believe you do know, Frank! I believe that you are the exceptional being who is neither above being happy or saying what makes him so. You don't vainly sigh after perfect elements that are never attained. We will hear your list first, it will nerve the rest. Now begin. You are happy because——'

'That sounds like the answer to a conundrum, or the commencement of a game, "I love my love

with an 'S,' because he is stupid and not psychological." My list of joys do you want? It is a short but all-sufficient one. I am with you in idleness and June!'

'The reasons we have assigned for Mr. Talbot's content are sounder,' Blanche Lyon replied, coolly. 'Now for yours, Miss Talbot!'

Trixy had grown pale as Mr. Bathurst spoke—pale with the pained consciousness that the man she loved was speaking words of flattery that were still words of truth to the careless winner of all his kindest thoughts. 'I am with you in idleness and June,' he had said, writing himself down by the utterance as much his own lover as Blanche's. 'He was a selfish Sybarite,' Trixy told herself as she looked at him lying there on the sward that was warmed by the sun—the sun that followed the fashion of sublunary things, and, as it seemed, touched Frank Bathurst more tenderly than it did aught else. Far more tenderly than it did the girl who was gazing on him with the yearning gaze of genuine affection—it dazzled, bewildered, scorched her; for when the heart is hot and restless externals are potent, then pleasure is a pain. Those words that he had said to Blanche Lyon were soft and sweet, gallant and gentle in themselves, and so only were what a man's utterance ought to be to a woman, but they sounded harshly and horribly in Trixy's ears. 'I am with you in idleness and June.' His list of the joys that made his life so pleasant a thing at this juncture began and ended in that one sentence. Trixy's heart ached as she took this truth home to it—but she went on loving him just as well as before.

'Now for your list, Miss Talbot,' Blanche repeated; and Trixy replied, 'I have none to give,' impatiently. She was not at all well inclined to make a study of her own sensations, for she more than suspected that when too curiously inspected there would be seen the 'little rift' which should by-and-by 'make all music mute' in her soul. The request that she would name the causes which conduced to her happiness, made

her think, and when she came to think she knew that she was not altogether happy. She became conscious of being jealous, fearful and hopeful at the same time—all about a man who told another woman that it was sufficient joy to him to be 'with her in idleness and June.' 'When sorrow sleepeth wake it not' is a sound piece of good advice. Trixy resolved that she would not more thoroughly arouse the three passions that were tormenting her by investigating them, so she answered, 'I have none to give,' rather more decidedly than suited the nature of the conversation; and Blanche flushed rather painfully under the consciousness of being thought frivolous by Lionel Talbot's sister.

'Have you none to give either, Lal?' Frank Bathurst asked, getting a half inch further away from Beatrix and nearer to Blanche and a broader sunbeam as he spoke. Miss Talbot's tone had chilled him a little. His ear was very finely attuned, and Trixy's voice seemed steady unto sternness. The poor girl was in such terrible earnest that she could not seize each point and make the most of the cards she held, as a cooler headed and hearted woman might have done. Frank Bathurst liked to hear a sweet voice falter; it told him a tale usually of feeling suppressed with difficulty, and called into being by him. But Beatrix, who was faltering inwardly, made an effort out of that partly inherent, partly taught 'self respect' which makes women hide the dart that wounds them the deepest—she made this effort, and her tone seemed stern, 'utterly devoid of that soft sympathetic inflexion which marked Blanche's,' he said to himself when Miss Lyon backed his appeal to Lionel by saying—

'Will you say you have none to give, Mr. Talbot?' And Lionel's eyes fixed themselves on hers as they had never done before, as he replied—

'Will you say that I am merely plagiarising Frank's happy thought, when I give as my reasons for happiness the facts that "I am—and am here?"'

'And they are enough—for the

present,' Blanche said quickly. 'At any rate they are the very ones I should have given if I had been clever enough to say exactly what I meant and no more; but you would soon want more than "idleness and June."'

'You are not quoting me fairly,' Frank Bathurst exclaimed. 'You say Lionel would soon want more, as if he were very superior in his requirements to me. I also should soon want more than you have mentioned—you have left out the chief ingredient I named.'

'Does he not utter false coin neatly?' Blanche asked, turning her head gaily towards Miss Talbot. In a moment the quick, kindly, womanly instinct made her glance away again, for Trixy, though she got out her 'Yes, very,' gallantly, had the tell-tale look of terrible earnestness upon her, and super-added to that earnestness was the dread that the coin might be real in which the flattery was paid.

'I have another source of joy,' Frank Bathurst resumed. 'The aborigines have not been down upon us overwhelmingly yet; I am beginning to hope that I have found the spot of earth where civilization is far enough advanced for a man to be credited with the sensible preference for dining in comfort in his own house rather than for going in discomfort to his neighbour's.'

'We have only been here one week,' Miss Lyon remarked.

'And how we might have suffered in that time—not from dinners, but from the anticipation of them! Women are never properly grateful for being neglected. For my part, "Time's sands may cease to flow, false pleasures to delude," ere I forget the claims of gratitude this neighbourhood has established on me for letting me alone to enjoy myself in the way I like best.'

'I am quite as alive to the negative favour shown as you can be, but I cannot forget that we have only been here a week; this is Saturday. I prophesy that after our second appearance in church to-morrow, we may as well go back to London for all the peace we shall know.'

'Do you mean that the native hordes will pour themselves into our Haldon? Cease to exercise your prophetic gift, sybil, if you can foreshadow nothing pleasanter concerning our future. "Trained to the chase, my eagle eye" discerns unmanageable bodies of bores in the distance. You have made me very miserable, Miss Lyon: cast a further spell around me, and soothe me back to bliss again.'

Mr. Bathurst gathered himself up from his recumbent position at his cousin's side as he spoke, and went into a half-kneeling posture at her feet, and she, falling into his humour for the moment, said, as she plucked a gorgeous crimson poppy from the bank at her side—

'Yours shall be "the Child's destiny." I will bind this flower (it induces oblivion, you know) on your brow.

"I'll sign you with a sign:
No woman's love shall light on thee,
No woman's heart be thine."

'How can you say such things, even in what you call fun?' Trixy asked, in a low tone.

'I defy such spells,' Mr. Bathurst said as he bent his head lower before the lady who was fixing the poppy in his glengarry. And Lionel Talbot chanted—

"No mistress of the hidden skill,
No wizard gaunt and grim,
Went up by night to heath or hill,
To read the stars for him."

'What are you talking about?' Frank asked, impatiently.

'Showing Miss Lyon that I knew the source from whence she is drawing her spell—or the words of it rather,' Lionel replied. 'Are you going to promise him the "brightest smiles that ever beauty wore, and the friendship which is only not love," Miss Lyon?'

'No,' she said, throwing her head back a little, and holding her hand up to command attention still. 'No—the last verse fits him best. Be grateful to me, Frank, for—

"I charm thee from the agony
Which others feel or feign,
From anger and from jealousy,
From doubt and from disdain.

"I bid thee wear the scorn of years
Upon the cheek of youth,
And curl the lip at passion's tears,
And shake the head at truth.

"While there is bliss in revelry,
Forgetfulness in wine,
Be thou from woman's love as free
As woman is from thine!"

'Good!' he cried, jumping up, 'while there is, and "only" while there is bliss in those things. Now you shall see me defy my bright fate. I will take weapons from the same armoury, and tell you that the web of indifference you have woven for me shall be rent—

"For I have learnt to watch and wake,
And swear by earth and sky,
And I am very bold to take"—

Do you believe me?

'Yes, thoroughly; but you must alter before you will be able to take anything worth having. "The lips are lightly begged or bought—the heart may not be thine," unless you alter and grow earnest,' Blanche replied.

'We shall see. It would be against your own interest, as successful propheteess, to teach me to be earnest, I suppose?'

'I never could be in earnest with you,' she said distinctly, and as she said so a doubt as to the real destiny of the Daphne crossed his mind for the first time. Circumstantial evidence was strongly in favour of Blanche having gathered in the bloom he had wasted; but circumstantial evidence is false frequently, and 'women are rum animals' he reflected as he remembered all Blanche's past sweetness to him, and all her present cool assumption of the possibility of his never really loving or being loved.

He did incline to this brilliant-plumaged bird very kindly indeed. Perhaps his reasons for doing so were not altogether above reproach; but at any rate, as reasons go, they are all-sufficient for the purposes of this story. It was quite upon the cards that he should surrender his own judgment to her, if she would accept the charge, and feel no shame, but rather a conscientious satisfaction in so doing. He felt intuitively, without working out the problem, 'why it was so,' that she was as good as

she was fair: not an angel, far removed from anything of that sort, but a very woman, good and graceful too, and perhaps ever so little disposed to show that she was both things without effort.

'Good,' and 'graceful,' and gifted with the power of putting herself in a good light before all men. Frank Bathurst prided himself much on the perfect tact which led the woman he was admiring (and who was doubtless admiring him) to make herself 'charming' to Lionel Talbot, as they walked up to the house. It may be that, if he had heard what the pair under consideration were saying, his appreciation of Blanche's tact might have been less perfect than it was.

'You seem to be well acquainted with Præd, Miss Lyon; what characteristic is it that has so won your approval?'

'I think it's his generosity,' she answered, quickly; 'I never thought about why I liked him until you asked me: his rhymes all fall in, in beautiful order, and that pleases my ear, of course; but he's always kindly and generous towards us women, even when he lifts the lay of the jilted. He "never will upbraid," and that is so nice, because he had it in him to upbraid so bitterly. Do you know that poem of his, "The Last?"'

'I know it,' he said. They were some way ahead of Frank and Trixy now, and Blanche's beaming face was held towards him eagerly, inspired by the interest she felt in the discussion of the moral merits of Præd's poems. He knew a great deal about the girl in a minute. He fathomed much that she had felt and was feeling. He realized that life is short, and the truth of the aphorism that 'the devil takes the hindmost' in most races came home to him. He was thrown off his balance, in fact, and so he spoke too soon, and he said too little.

'Yes, I know "The Last;" my favourite verse at this moment is the fourth—

"I think that you will love me still,
Though far our fates may be,
And that your heart will fondly thrill
When strangers ask of me.

"My praise will be your proudest theme
When these bright days are past;
If this be all an idle dream,
It is my last!"

There was interrogation—meaning deep and intense in the tone in which he uttered the words. For a few minutes the woman's weakness conquered the woman's will, and Blanche Lyon, desperate in love, was feeble in action and insincere in word.

'If I dared, if I dared,' she stammered; and while he was thinking that she dared not 'love him still,' and 'proudly thrill' to his praise, because of some prior claim on her—while he was thinking still, and she was hesitating only because he did not bid her not to hesitate, the others came up, and the opportunity was gone.

He had spoken too soon. He felt that he had spoken too soon as he looked at the home they were nearing, and knew that it might be Blanche Lyon's if no one intervened between her and Frank. And she felt bitterly that he had said too little, and thought hard things of the social bonds which prevented her inciting him to say a little more, and found Frank Bathurst's animation oppressive, and was altogether indisposed to believe in the silver lining to this temporary cloud. "Misfortunes rarely come singly," listen,' she quoted irrelevantly (forgetting that the others were ignorant of what she deemed a misfortune); then they all followed her example, and paused to listen to the sound of wheels, and presently a ponderous carriage swept round the curve of the drive, and they knew that the flood-gates of society were opened, and that their happy lotus-eating days were over.

'Let us be grateful for that it has been but a brief infiction,' Frank said, when the visitor—a lady who had come in kindness to ask them to an archery meeting—had departed again, feeling very dissatisfied with Mrs. Lyon's fitness for the part of chaperone, and very much staggered at the perfect propriety which marked the demeanour of the daring Miss Lyon, who 'had refused her father's request, and her uncle's

fortune, and after all had now come down to try and catch Mr. Bathurst, so people said.'

'I think her most pleasant,' Mrs. Lyon interposed, hastily; 'most pleasant and agreeable,' she repeated, emphatically; and Frank replied—

'So did I; but you will understand that—'

"It was frightful here to see
A lady richly clad as she"

when I came in, conscious of grass-seeds in my moustache, and dead leaves on the back of my coat, and an all-pervading sensation of disinclination to speak to uninteresting people. Miss Lyon shared my sentiments. I could see by her face that she was bored—that we were sympathetic again, in fact.'

He spoke half laughingly, half tenderly; looking at her the while with a clear, full gaze, that seemed to make sure of being kindly met, and answered. He had often looked at her so of late, and Blanche had accepted the frank offering frankly. But to-day another had gone deeper into her soul than Frank, with all his bright-heartedness, and easy satisfaction with himself, could ever go. She moved impatiently under his observation: she resented his declaration as to the sympathy between them. 'Miss Lyon did nothing of the sort; she was bored about something else,' she said, wearily. 'Sympathetic! you are far away from knowing the meaning of the word if you think I was that with you just now.'

'You are growing quite earnest in your denial! And don't I know the meaning of the word?' He was a vain young fellow, but there was something winning in his vanity at most times, to most women—something specially winning in it to Blanche. But to-day she lacked patience for it among other things. She had known him for a butterfly all along, she told herself; and she had thought that a butterfly must ever be a pleasing and welcome object about one's path, whatever the weather. Now she found that sunshine was a chief condition: the butterfly was out of place now a cloud had arisen on her horizon. It irritated her that he should seek to

put her in the position of understanding him more clearly than the others did, when she did not desire to understand him better. It roused her *esprit de corps* when he repeated, in his merry, vaunting, successful manner, 'Don't I know the meaning of the word? More women have been sympathetic with me than I would care to count.' Affectionately fond as she was of him, she could not resist replying, when he said that—

'Leporello sings the list of names: a genuine Don Juan would scorn to proclaim his own doughty deeds.'

'I was not boasting,' he exclaimed, quickly, and his fair face coloured like a girl's as he spoke.

'Were you not?' Blanche replied, carelessly; 'there was a tone about the speech that we may be forgiven for having mistaken for boasting; may we not, Miss Talbot?'

'A tone you have never been hard upon before,' Trixy replied. She saw his faults too; but she would have touched them so tenderly herself, that it almost pained her to see them roughly torn into the light by another: especially did she dislike seeing them torn into the light by Blanche Lyon. It was hard, woefully hard, to Trixy to see the man she loved laying himself open to the feminine sarcasms of her rival; to see him accepting rebukes, rather than nothing, at Miss Lyon's hands; hard to mark him as so willing to put himself at Miss Lyon's feet; and perhaps harder still to mark that Miss Lyon did not deem it a priceless boon that he should be there. To be rivalled at all is horrible: to be rivalled by one who does not even deign to seem to care to rival is humiliating. So Trixy Talbot said that Blanche 'had never been hard upon that tone before;' and Frank's blue eyes sought his cousin's, and seemed to implore her to endorse the statement.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN HOUR OF BLISS.

They had all—she, the woman he loved, amongst the number—spoken of him and his possible occupation

so lightly and carelessly down by the lake, and in very truth he had been knowing much bitterness. The shadow of the blow that had fallen was upon him, even when he came down to Haldon; but the blow itself had not descended until this morning, when he read at the breakfast table that the one company in which he had been well warranted, by most exemplary example, to have trust, had engulfed itself, and all who had faith, or at least money, in it, in unqualified ruin.

Edgar Talbot was not endowed with the *physique* that enables a man to rise up buoyantly under a sense of utter commercial discomfiture. Perhaps the men who can do this are about in the world somewhere, but it has never been my lot to meet them out of print; and as I seek to paint from the life, I will tell of that I have seen alone. While his sister, and his friends, and, above all, the woman he loved, were down by the lake, 'gathering' the odorous roses of love and youth, of idleness and June—while they were doing this, according to their different degrees, Edgar Talbot was going through several phases of well-developed agony and despair.

From the date at which he commenced thinking about life, and the responsibilities of life at all, he had set himself the congenial task of amassing such a fortune as should make his family (that is, himself) important and considerable. In the fulfilment of this resolve he had exercised self-restraint and denial of no mean order for many years. He had rigorously ordered his course, abstaining from much that was harmless, because it was not profitable, and from a little that was profitable because it was not harmless, it may be added to his credit. He had held aloof from society, women, wine, and other expensive things; and he had his reward for this abstinence in being well reputed and rich at an age when many of his compeers were being repudiated for being such reprobates as to be compelled to retrench. It had been very well with him, in fact, when he first saw Blanche Lyon. Then he commenced perpetrating a series

of mistakes. First he fell in love with a 'tocherless' lass with a long pedigree; then he made resolutions concerning her which he had not the power to keep; and, finally, he played higher than ever for fortune's favours, in order that he might afford such a luxury as Miss Lyon for a wife without cost to his own conscience. And now the end had come!

The end! Such a black, bitter, hard, ruinous end as it was, too. He had lost all that was his own, and much that was not his own, and he knew that all would call him a fool, and some might call him a swindler. He had advised others to act as he had done, and the others would not now be slow to remember that he had so advised them. He had impoverished one sister, and left another penniless. He had no hope, reasonable or the reverse, of ever entering upon that exciting career which had been as the breath of life to him. His life, as it would and must be, stretched itself out before him in vivid colours and clearly-cut lines; and he looked at it, and saw it as it was—a life of toil and obscurity—and knew that he must live it. His career—that which is to a man what love is to a woman—was dead, and he stood at its bier knowing that there would be no resuscitation. As this knowledge was driven deeper and deeper into his mind, he went through some of the hardest pains of the most horrible Inferno. There was no compensation to him in any probable combination of circumstances that might befall him. Had he been able to realise it at once he would not have accepted the love of the woman for whom he had a passion as part payment for what he had lost. In one way it was all over with him, and he laid no flattering false unction to his soul on the subject.

Still, devoid as he was of that sort of half-poetic, half-weakly sensibility which makes some gentle-natured people turn tearfully to friendship and love in all troubles that assail them—devoid as he was of this, he did think once or twice, as he wrote responses to the notes of ruin which

had sounded in his ears this morning, of Blanche Lyon. He did not tell himself that he should turn from ambition to love—find consolation in her caresses, and an incentive to ignominiously obscure industry in her wifely smiles and womanly satisfaction, with the poor lot he could offer her instead of the rich one he might have offered her. But he told himself that come what would she should be his wife if he could get her. He was a practical man, barren of all poetical feeling to a degree that may or may not be rare, but that at any rate was great. He was also a passionate man, and his passion for Blanche was of the sort that made him feel that any fate which could be endured by him could be endured by her. She came into the consideration of his plans, which may be accepted as a proof that he loved her. Whether that love was selfish or not is a hard question for a third person to answer.

'Talbot looks as if he had had a tight time of it,' Frank Bathurst muttered to Lionel when Mr. Talbot came and joined them at the luncheon table at last, and Lionel, looking at his brother's face, read there that it was even so as Frank said, for the signs of the warfare in which he had been worsted were about him still, visibly about him; even the ladies saw the signs and were more subdued than the day deserved they should be.

'We're almost by way of being strangers some way or other,' Frank Bathurst said, in continuation of the subject, later in the day, when he and Lionel were alone together; 'otherwise if anything is a little off the line it might be righted again; but a fellow doesn't care to broach the business with a reserved man like Talbot.'

'I am afraid something is more than a little off the line,' Lionel replied. 'Edgar is not a man to be beaten by a trifle, and he is beaten now; I'll give him a chance of telling me if he likes by-and-by; but I will not press him.'

'Give him to understand that if I can help him, and he does not take my help, it will be a slight on

your feeling for and interest in him, for you'll advise him to Lal won't you?'

'Advise him what?'

'To let me help him.'

'If he is beaten, as I fear, it would be snatching at a straw simply to take such help as you could give him, Frank; however, I shall hear.'

He did hear in time, but not that day; there could be no good gained, Edgar Talbot argued, by talking about things before he was compelled to talk about them. Lionel would know quite soon enough that his own 500*l.* had gone the way of the bulk of his father's property. Trixy would play the cards she held in her hand better while her mind was undisturbed by the knowledge of the utter ruin in which her guardian brother was steeped. As Mr. Talbot thought this he seemed to see light in the darkness. His sister did hold good cards in her hand if she only played them properly. With Frank Bathurst for a brother-in-law, he might even yet—

'Do you know what Bathurst has a year? he asked abruptly of Lionel, and Lionel replied—

'About twelve thousand, I believe,' and fell into a reverie on the subject of whether or not it would be shared by Blanche Lyon.

They never sat long over their wine after the ladies had left them in this arcadian Bohemia of Haldon. The daylight was but just dying off the sky when Lionel, followed by Frank Bathurst, came to the two girls in the drawing-room and asked 'which was to reign to-night, moonlight or melody?'

'Put the alternatives more clearly before us, Mr. Talbot,' Blanche answered, moving a little nearer to the window, which was open, as she spoke.

'Well, shall we go out on the lawn, or shall we sit by the piano, and hear Trixy and you sing?'

'You won't hear Trixy sing to-night, Lionel,' that young lady put in hurriedly.

'What does Miss Lyon say?'

'The lawn is so much sweeter than my own voice that I am going out to enjoy it,' Blanche replied,

walking through the window as she spoke. Lionel followed her willingly enough, and so it came to pass that Beatrix found herself alone with Frank Bathurst, or as good as alone, Mrs. Lyon being at the far end of the room fast asleep.

She was very fond of him—so fond of him that she forgave him all his little attentions to Blanche and all his little inattentions to herself, though both were very patent to her—so fond of him that she was ready, ay ready, to hear the faint sound of encouragement which her own heart offered to herself as she marked that he did not seem very anxious to leave her and follow Blanche. Certainly he did say, ‘Do you not care for the lawn to-night?’ but when she shook her head in the negative, and seated herself on the window-sill, he drew a low chair close opposite to her, and placed himself upon it, and looked quite ready to resume his old fervent admiration for her hair and eyes.

‘Why will you not sing to-night?’ he began.

‘I am not in tune.’

‘Nor was I quite till I sat down here and looked at you. I am sympathetic, whatever Blanche may say to the contrary; your low spirits acted on me, and now that you have brightened I have done the same.’

Beatrix felt her brow burning. She was conscious that she had brightened at heart when he planted himself opposite to her, and now it was made manifest by the manner of his gaze at her—a gaze in which there was a little appeal and a good deal of admiring audacity—that she had brightened in the face also. Feeling herself thrown off her guard, it was but natural that she should endeavour to disarm him, as it were. So she spoke of her rival, and spoke injudiciously.

‘Miss Lyon cast a spell over you. Have you forgotten it?’ she asked, significantly; and he accepted the double meaning, and disappointed poor Trixy by saying, laughingly, with the fresh, frank, outspoken vanity which so eminently characterised him—

‘Forgotten it—no, indeed; I have

set myself a glorious task, Miss Talbot, to make the prophets prove the falsity of her own prophecy.’

‘Glorious, indeed,’ Trixy answered.

‘Shall I find it “love’s labour lost” do you think?’ he asked, leaning forward and lowering his voice, and intensely appreciating the graceful bend of Miss Talbot’s head as she sat with her cheek resting on her hand before him. It so pleased his taste to have the friendship and companionship and interest of lovely women, that he almost felt inclined to take Miss Talbot into his confidence concerning his feelings for Blanche. But he forgot this inclination, or, at any rate, forbore to gratify it, when for answer to his last question Trixy gave a little angry sigh, and covered her eyes with her hand.

He loved beauty, softness, sentiment with all his heart and soul. If Blanche had been before him there would have been a counter-acting influence in her brilliant presence; but as it was, the seductive softness of that sweet, reproachful sigh made him forget everything in the world but Trixy for a time. It was so very much a habit of his to get all he could out of life, to gather every flower, to listen to every sweet sound, to push every pleasant feeling to the verge, and at all times to let his fancies lightly turn to thoughts of love; it was so very much a habit of his to do all these things, that it never occurred to him that he might be playing with fire. So now, in accordance with the dictates of this gay second nature of his, he bent towards Beatrix, and asked her very tenderly if he had annoyed her.

‘No,’ she said, ‘not annoyed me.’

‘What is it then?’ he whispered. ‘Look up at me and tell me that I have not unwittingly said something that pains you.’ And then she obeyed him; dropped her hands down, and glanced up at him with her great loving violet eyes. And the beauty worshipper could but look lovingly and earnestly into hers in return, and feel very sorry that the lamp and tea would come in

presently, and dispel the soft light and softer sensations—looked at her so lovingly and earnestly, indeed, that she trembled at being so near (as she believed) to the bliss she craved, and so said she would ‘go and look for Edgar,’ and made as though she would rise as she spoke.

But he stopped her by putting his hand down on hers, and saying,

“No, no, stay with me lady while you may,
For life’s so sad—this hour ’s so sweet.”

Then silence reigned, and as his clasp grew closer she forgot that ‘life is sad’ in the sweetness of that hour.

‘What a howling wilderness this will be to Lal and me when you all go,’ he said at length, and his speech slackened the spell, and Trixy felt herself able to command her feelings and release her hand.

‘Oh, you will get on very well without us,’ she said, uttering a commonplace truth because it was the easiest thing to utter at the moment. Then the lamp and tea did come in, and Frank sprang up and offered her his arm, and proposed ‘that they should go and call the others in.’

She accepted his proposal with a shy delight that was born of the hope she had that when once he got her into the garden he would forget the nominal object of their being there, and think of her alone. But as soon as they were outside he proved himself to be very much in earnest in the search by giving a series of call whistles, which were soon answered by Lionel. Then they all met, and the two young men sang a German student’s song with an hilarious refrain, and romance was over for that night as far as Beatrix and Mr. Bathurst were concerned.

CHAPTER XV.

MISUNDERSTANDING.

There had been nothing definite said either by Lionel Talbot or Miss Lyon during that stroll they had taken about on the lawn. But somehow or other it came to them both to have a great feeling of satisfac-

tion and security about each other and the future before they came in to tea. The strain of the morning was not resumed; nevertheless Blanche could not make any complaint of there being a lack of harmony. For the first time Lionel Talbot spoke to her of his future, assumed that she felt an interest in his hopes and prospects, and ‘for the first time also,’ he said, he ‘began to take an interest in these latter himself.’

‘I shall never sacrifice the means to the end, or practise my art less worthily for being animated by the hope of mere commercial success attending it,’ he had said to her, and she had replied—

‘I thoroughly believe you. I feel that it will always be impossible for you to seek any reward for the mere sake of the reward; but what has come to you that you should even think of “success,” Mr. Talbot? I “don’t own you,” as old women say, when you utter such sentiments.’

‘Do they seem ignoble to you?’

‘No, indeed, no; but the others, the ones I heard from you, or rather heard attributed to you, at first were so very different. I thought you were the sort of man to go on working for ever, and to be very careless as to whether the work was ever known, or seen, or valued, or paid for, so long as you yourself had the satisfaction of knowing it to be good and true work.’

‘You must have thought me an unpractical idiot,’ Lionel said, laughing, ‘yet, to a certain degree, you judged rightly. I did love my art, with a perfect love that cast out every other consideration than its honour from my mind; now I know another love, and it shall ennoble my art, and my art shall exalt it. Do I still seem inconsistent? do you still refuse “to own me?” or do you understand me?’

‘I think I do—I hope I do,’ she had answered, hurriedly; and then Frank Bathurst’s whistle sounded in their ears, and the talk about the translation of some of Lionel’s theories came to an end. But Blanche had heard enough to make her feel sisterly and sympathetic towards

Beatrix and Edgar. 'Poor Mr. Talbot, he has been by himself, writing letters, all day,' she said; 'one of us ought to take him a cup of tea, and beguile him back amongst us. You look tired, Miss Talbot; shall I go?'

She looked for an answer from Lionel, and he gave it quickly, remembering, with a pang, that it was the second time this day that Blanche had remarked on his brother's absence. Was his (Lionel's) claim upon her a vicarious one, after all? Was the interest she expressed for him but the offspring of the regard she felt for Edgar?

'It would be very kind of you to do it—very kind, indeed.' Then he held the door open for her, and Blanche sailed away to the library with a cup of tea in her hand, and the comforting thought in her heart that she was on the way to show a graceful, womanly attention to a man who was much to be pitied here where others were so full of the joy of loving and being loved, in that he seemed to stand outside it all.

It was a speciality of hers to sweep about softly, however fast and freely she walked. Her garments never rustled, nor did her silk dresses go off in crisp cracks as she swiftly moved about. Her step was so light and true, her progress so noiseless, that Edgar Talbot remained unconscious of his solitude being broken in upon until she gained his side and spoke.

'Mr. Talbot, I have brought you some tea, and I am charged with a special commission from the rest to take you back with me.'

Then he got up from the chair in which he had been seated, with his face bent down towards the ground in intense absorbing thought—got up, and took the cup from her, and then took both her wrists in his hands, and made her face him, which she did, wonderingly.

'You have come to me—will you stay with me?'

'Here? in this room? Oh, yes, if I can help you at all.'

'You can't help me,' he replied, impatiently. The idea of any woman's assistance would have seemed

against conceit at the brightest time; at present it seemed a suggestion fraught with the most contemptible folly. Still he was in love with the woman who had made it, so he contented himself with saying, 'You can't help me at all,' and then adding, 'except by staying with me, and hearing what I have to say. I have bad news for you—very bad news.' Then he released one of her hands, and picked up a paper-knife, which he balanced cleverly on his finger, as an aid to eloquence, apparently, for when he had got it into perfect swing, he went on, 'I have bad news for you. I am not wrong in thinking that the tale of my ruin—of the ruin of all connected with me—will sound harshly in your ears?'

'Harshly! Oh! Mr. Talbot, horribly, horribly!' There was no aversion manifested in the horror she expressed, no falling away from him. Her face grew pale, and her eyes softened, but not unto tears, as she moved back a step under the blow he dealt. Then she gave his hand a good hearty grip—a sort of promissory note of friendship, should he ever need it—and went on—'It would sound so feeble if I told you that I am sorry, and the words would not tell you half that I am; women's words, and ways, and wills are so weak when it comes to the point.' Then she paused, out of breath, with sympathy, and the reflection that he had said 'all connected with him' shared his misery; and she remembered that it might be hers to have to comfort Lionel; and her heart rose freely to the task.

'Your words are not weak; I shall soon know whether your will is equally strong or not. Many a man situated as I am would try to work on your tenderness by telling you he was a beggar. I do not tell you this, for I never could be a beggar, and I don't like the figure of speech; but the lot I have to offer a woman will be little better than a beggar's in reality—will you share it?'

In very truth, versed as she was in all the signs of men's love, this came upon her as a surprise—a sur-

prise that wounded, shamed, hurt her in some way apparently, for she bowed her head under it in no coquetish fashion.

'I would not have had you say such words for the world,' she whispered, presently; 'forget them—forget that I have heard them. Oh! Mr. Talbot, you have made me so miserable!—and I have liked you so.'

She spoke as one who was bitterly disappointed—as one who had steeled herself to bear ill news, but not such news as this. Edgar Talbot had never realized before that it is possible to put a woman to very painful confusion by proposing to her. He told himself that his cousin, Frank Bathurst, had been in the field before him, and he did, for a minute or two, hate his host very heartily.

'You have seemed to like me,' he said.

'And I have liked you, and I do like you so much—so very, very much—but not in that way.'

'If I had said these words to you down at the Grange, when I knew you first—when I first loved you—your answer would have been different?'

'Yes, it would,' she answered, frankly, 'for I hadn't the feeling, the liking for you had not come then to give me pain.'

'And I was a rich man then.'

'You do not believe what you imply,' she said, indignantly. 'Ah! my words are weak, indeed, for I feel that if I spoke for ever you would not understand me: you do wrong me when you hunt at your change of fortune influencing my feelings about you—you do, but you will never believe it.'

She spoke seriously, standing before him with her fingers interlaced and her hands held down low before her. She had been humiliated at first by the feeling of self-reproach which assailed her for not having seen and stopped this before the words were spoken. But now she asked herself why should she suffer delicate scruples on behalf of a man who could misjudge her so meanly as Edgar Talbot was doing? His brother would not have done so;

and at the thought of his brother she softened towards him again, and looked up to see if she might obey the womanly instinct to comfort him without being misunderstood.

It is a fact that a woman cannot for long think hardly of a man who either tells or shows her that he loves her, however lowly she may rate his regard. 'Affection never is wasted,' for if it enrich not the giver, it decidedly elevates the recipient in her own estimation, which is a reading of his verse never intended by Longfellow. In this case, though Blanche Lyon was honestly sorry 'that it should be so,' her sorrow was qualified by a certain pleasurable feeling of increased appreciation for the man who caused it. A woman is always sure to discover a few more commendable or admirable touches in the character of a man who avows that he loves her. So now Blanche remembered all that she knew of Mr. Talbot's best, and looked up and longed to comfort him.

He was standing, still carefully balancing the paper-cutter on his finger, still resolutely making it keep from falling a hair's breadth too much on either side. His present occupation contrasted forcibly with the experiences he had but lately gone through—this was so little, and they were so large. Yet she knew that he was not frivolous. It must be that what he willed to do he would do. And he had willed to love and marry her.

A sudden, irrepressible, intense belief in the magnitude of a man's mind and the strength of a man's will swept across her soul, and her desire to comfort him was merged in a desire that he would not oppose or quell her in any way, or, as she worded it to herself, that 'he should let her alone.' She felt very nervous before this man, who had offered her marriage and accused her of mercenary motives. If he held to his course, and assumed her past interest in him to have been a sentiment which would have ripened into love had his fortune not changed, where should she be with Lionel when he came to hear of it? She would be regarded as a common-

place, flirting, false, vain, interested creature by Lionel—as one who had angled in every stream for any kind of fish. The dread of being so made her miserable and brave at the same time, and she spoke earnestly and well.

‘Mr. Talbot, will you be very merciful in your strength? will you forget what you have said, and let me forget it too, and be a friend to me?’

‘That is the trashy cant of school-girls and virtuous heroines in novels,’ he interrupted, impatiently. And she felt that if she would have her appeal heard she must make it very short.

‘Well, then, will you keep this secret, because, if it were known, it would prevent the man I love loving me?’

‘By Jove! you’re candid.’

‘I’m more than candid, I’m audacious; and I know it. But I ask it of you; will you keep my secret?’

‘Most men would call it theirs.’

‘Most men would be wrong, then. It’s mine, inasmuch as the betrayal of it would harm me more than it would hurt you; some of my friends would find it impossible to believe that I had not been to blame for more than blindness in the matter.’

‘You are great at making mistakes,’ he said, quietly; ‘now you are attributing all manner of fine feeling, which he does not possess, to the man you fancy you love. I know him better.’

‘You ought to know him better, but you know nothing of him if you can say that.’

‘He will always seek what other men seek, and strive to win what other men want,’ Edgar Talbot went on, disregarding her; ‘his love is not worth the name; it will always flow in the courses other men open up to his vision; he’s acting an unworthy part now towards you and towards—’ He paused, and Blanche cried—

‘Towards whom?’

‘Towards another woman. I will not mention her name; you will know it in time. He’s weak, vain, and impressionable—and you prefer him to me?’

‘I have stayed here too long,’ she said, turning to go; and then he

followed her, and stood so that he barred her egress from the door.

‘I have more to say, Miss Lyon, and you must hear it.’

She bowed her head acquiescently, and then stood, resting her chin in her left hand, and holding the supporting elbow in her right hand, in that attitude of mingled resignation and impatience which is familiar to women.

‘You shall hear it, and you shall not forget it. You will follow your own path now; mine seems too dreary for you to tread. You will marry; you will be happy for a time; then he will neglect you, and you will remember my love, and—turn to it.’

‘Heaven forgive you these words!’ She shuddered, and looked as though she could not be kind, as she prayed heaven might be.

‘Whether or not, they are spoken, and you will think of them by-and-by; you will realise then that there is a difference between the man who feigns a passion for every woman and the man who feels it for one; and you will feel then that you have not been guiltless in this matter.’

He spoke as if he were very much in earnest. She was woman enough to feel sorry for the sorrow that would be worded; she was also woman enough to feel sorry for herself. ‘Love turned to gall’ in the bosom of Lionel Talbot’s brother might prove a bitter element in her life.

‘At least believe that I have not been guilty in design,’ she pleaded; ‘it never seemed to me to be possible that you could be thinking of me in the way you have done me the honour to think of me.’

He shook his head in disbelief.

‘What reason had you for thinking me so blind or so cold as not to see your beauty and be touched by your sympathy? You have seemed to like me; you have shown so marked a preference for my society, and so unmistakable an interest in my prospects, that I am justified to myself in having expected a different answer from you. I had discovered nothing in your character or manner to lead me to suppose you a weak, vain, or false woman—’

'And you are not justified in judging me to be either of these things now.'

'I will not judge you—at least I will not word my judgment of you, but I will ask you to judge yourself when I have put your conduct before you plainly.'

'Mr. Talbot—not even the honour you have done me entitles you to take up the position of my accuser in this way: conscience free as I am, I am still bitterly sorry that I should have been the means of leading you to make a mistake: that is all I can say—I am bitterly sorry.'

'Not so bitterly sorry as I am, not that I should have "made a mistake," as that it should "be a mistake;" you are the first woman on whom I have set my heart—you will be the last, yet you can calmly tell me "I have made a mistake, and that you are conscience free." Miss Lyon, men do not "make mistakes" nor are women "conscience free," in such cases; we call acts criminal that do not carry such a train of evil consequences with them as this of yours.'

He looked so quelled, so miserable, so hopeless, and reckless as he said this, that she longed to soothe him back to better feeling, both for his own sake and another's. But she dared not do it. The man had charged her plainly with having before this shown signs of love for him which she had not felt, and she could not tell him that the love had been not for him but for his brother. She must be content to be reviled and rebuked, maligned, and misunderstood for a time. So she accepted his last harsh words in silence, and when he ceased speaking she tried to pass by him quietly once more.

'Don't go yet,' he entreated in softer tones than he had used heretofore; 'from this night mine will be a black, barren road; bear with me patiently now.'

The altered tone broke down her hardly-sustained resolution. She turned to him with all a woman's tender pitifulness in her blushing face and tear-filled eyes.

'Mr. Talbot, you will break my

heart unless you tell me you forgive me for having added to your troubles. I shall never be happy again if you do not promise me to go out to meet your altered fortune brightly and bravely as a man should?'

'Such going out is easy in theory.'

'And in practice too! ah! you smile; but I am not speaking as a fool entirely without experience.'

'You speak as a woman.'

'I grant that—as a woman should speak who has fought a long monotonous fight without hope of glory, and who feels that she can fight it over again on the same, or even harder terms, without repining or regret.'

'Fight it with me; the terms will be harder, but you have the heart to fulfil them gallantly.'

'It cannot be now. I wish it could. I think it would if I had known you as I know you now before I had got to love some one else better than my life. "Hard terms!" I'd fulfil the hardest willingly with the man I loved who had the courage to say the hard truths to me that you have said.'

'Do you mean that for consolation? because if you do, I must tell you that it falls short of your intention.'

'I scarcely know what I intend it for—yes I do; I intend you to understand through it that I understand and sympathise, and, to a certain degree, regard you very warmly—hard as you have been on me—cuttingly as you have tried to make me feel that I have been weak, and vain, and false.' Then she paused, came down from her impassioned height, and added, 'What will they think of us in the drawing-room?'

'They will "think"—naturally enough—that the one who came to seek stayed to comfort me; they will "know" nothing more, unless you tell them.'

'You do think very poorly of me.'

'No; but I think it more than possible that in some unguarded moment you may utter the truth concerning me; not in the spirit of a vaunt; you will not boast, but the day will come, surely, when you will feel proud of having gained my

love, and then you will tell that you rejected it.'

'Never,' she exclaimed, earnestly; 'it is much to be proud of, I know that; but my pride in it makes me proud for you;' then the present difficulty beset her again and she asked, 'Had I not better go back to the others?'

'And gratify any curiosity they may be feeling by looking agitated; no, go up to your own room if you wish to be spared question and remark.' Then he stood slightly on one side, and she knew that she was free to pass him, and then the will to do so immediately left her, and she hesitated. This was a crisis in their lives; she felt sure of that; things would not go on after it as they had gone on before it; and as she remembered only what had been pleasant in the lately past period, she sighed and regretted, and wondered what would be altered.

'May I feel sure that we part in kindness?' she asked.

'If I told you, "Yes," the telling would give your mind, or conscience, or heart, or whatever chances to be vexed on my account, no ease when you came to reflect on it; kindness does not overflow the heart of a man when he finds himself balked at every turn; it is being given a stone when one has asked for bread to be offered kindness instead of the love I wanted—the love I looked for from you.'

When he said that in just the same tone in which he had previously said that she "had seemed to like him," she lingered no longer, but went away as he had suggested, to her own room, where she speedily became absorbed in the perplexing question of whether or not the love of one brother would militate against her interests with the other? The result of the debate between hope and fear was, that pity for Mr. Talbot became submerged in anxiety about her own love; and then she suddenly cast all selfish considerations aside as the remembrance struck her that the fortunes of the Talbot family were at a low ebb—that Edgar, the head of the house, was a ruined man.

CHAPTER XVI.

BROTHERLY COUNSEL.

They had all begun to speculate silently in their own minds as to what could be detaining Blanche long before Mr. Talbot walked into their midst, which he did very soon after Miss Lyon left him.

'Where is Miss Lyon? I hoped she would be here to give us some music,' he said as he came near to the table round which they were gathered. And when Beatrix had answered, 'Why, Edgar! we thought she went to the library to you,' the difficulty which Miss Lyon had foreseen as to what 'would be thought of her in the drawing-room' was got over to all outward seeming, for no further remark was made. Later in the evening she came back to them, and then Mrs. Lyon insisted on their all being struck with the fact of Blanche looking as though she had a headache, and Mr. Talbot quoted Schiller to himself to the effect that 'against stupidity even the gods fight in battle.'

Mr. Talbot had gone through a hard task this night. He had pleaded earnestly—ardently for him—for the love of a woman in the face of fortune and her avowed preference for somebody else. The task had been very hard to him, but as he had entered upon it after much deliberation, so now he had no self-reproachful thoughts about the manner in which he had performed it. Whatever there was of mistake or mortification in the matter, ought to be and was with her. He had not been led away by his own feelings more than by her manner. 'She had seemed to like him,' and in such seeming there was shame for her, not for him, since it had ended in this. On the whole, deeply as he loved her, and desperately as he desired to win her even yet for his wife, there was more justice than mercy in his judgment of her. He used no shallow euphemisms in naming what he conceived to have been her conduct to himself. She had been guilty of the despicable guile of 'tender artifice, and flattering lure, and feigned interest,'

so he thought, and she had used these despicable means for the more despicable end of luring him into a false position. As she sat before him trying to be as she had been hitherto to him and to them all, and he thought these things, he felt pitiless towards her, and towards that lax modern code which suffers a woman to pursue such a course, and still considers her pure.

It was a heavy secret for her to be weighted with, this knowledge which he had imparted to her that commercially his career had come to a close. It made her feel most pitifully tender towards the rest, and specially pitiful towards him, the luckless head of the house who had wrought its ruin. Her heart ached as she glanced furtively at him, and guessed what some of his hopes had been, and fathomed a good deal of the hopelessness that was his portion now. But she dared make no sign of such tenderness and pity, for she knew that did she do so, the others would fall to wondering about the reason why she came to be better informed than they were, and he would misconstrue her again. So she sat and glanced furtively at him now and again, and wondered when he would be frank with the rest, and she would be free to speak some of the sympathy she felt.

The following day, long before he intended being led into it, the discussion of the subject was forced upon Edgar Talbot by circumstances. Contrary to his usual custom, he went away to the stable with the other two young men immediately after breakfast, instead of, as usual, shutting himself in the library, when Mr. Bathurst occupied himself, and strove to interest his guests, by enlarging on, and showing off, the beauties and excellencies of three new riding horses. Soon Mr. Bathurst was away on one which was reputed to be a famous fencer, along a slip of turf whereon a few hurdles were put up for practice; and the two brothers, as they sauntered after him nominally to watch his progress, suddenly found themselves on the topic which had a fatal fascination for them both.

'That mare is too slight for Ba-

thurst,' Edgar observed, as she visibly flagged on a space of marshy turf, and Lionel replied—

'He has an idea of giving her to Miss Lyon.'

'Has he that? Then Trixy's chance is over, for Miss Lyon will accept the mare first, and then the man. She has played with a most shameful cleverness; until last night she did not know which of us stood to win; then I frankly put myself before her as a ruined man, and she enacted surprise and confusion, and made the usual plea of misconception of my intentions.' Then he grew more bitter under the sting of being so soon superseded, as he imagined, by a man whom he regarded as something infinitely lighter and less worthy than himself, and added, 'Blanche Lyon is a clever woman, but her tactics are transparent to me and she will repent them.'

'God bless and prosper her, whatever they are,' Lionel interposed, heartily. 'But you, Edgar! What do you mean by placing yourself before Miss Lyon as a ruined man?'

'That I did it—that I am one,' and then Lionel uttered an interjection, and then the whole story, at least as much of it as could be told, and was necessary to be known, was narrated by Mr. Talbot.

The elder brother did not put himself in the position of one who has erred, and repented before Lionel, 'I did what I thought was best for the family, and my judgment has been proved faulty.' He said when he had finished, 'If I succeeded, you would all have benefited as largely as myself by my success; as I have failed, I shall be the greatest sufferer. I wish I could be the only one.'

'Don't feel that I am a sufferer in the affair at all,' Lionel said, feeling that he was called upon to say something. 'Such plaus as I have made will carry themselves out without let or hindrance from this business, save so far as Trixy is concerned.'

'Trixy will still be my charge,' Edgar replied firmly, and he was very much the head of the house still as he spoke. 'Trixy will be my

charge. I shall begin at the foot of the ladder, and she must be content to take her stand there with me. I could have wished that she had married Bathurst. As it is, the best I can do for her I will do; Miss Lyon has put it out of the question that any wife of mine can interfere with my sister.' When he said that he smiled with a sort of cruel triumph over himself, and Lionel knew that his brother was sorely wounded by this woman whom they both loved.

'You think Miss Lyon has given you reason to feel wronged by her decision?' he asked.

'I have not a doubt of it—not a doubt of it. I am not a man to falsely construe every little feminine artifice into a special flattery for myself; she meant me to believe what I did believe.'

'She has a very gracious manner,' Lionel said; and at that gentle protest against further censure of either Miss Lyon's motives or manner, Edgar Talbot grew irritable.

'I tell you,' he said, 'that she meant me to believe what I did believe—that she would marry me if I asked her; she spurns the notion of being considered mercenary: but now—after seeming to like me as no other woman has suffered herself to seem within my experience—after this she has refused me, pleading her love for a richer man as a reason why she cannot marry me. "Gracious!" Such graciousness is devil-born.'

'She did give you that reason?'

'She did—gave it out with what she herself rightly called more audacity than candour.'

When his brother said that, Lionel Talbot once more determined that Algeria should be his sketching-ground during the ensuing autumn. For himself, it was not his habit to consider that anything was owed to him on account of that 'graciousness of Blanche's. But for his brother! He was fain to acknowledge that if Edgar nothing extenuated, nor set down aught in malice, he had been wronged by this woman, whom Lionel could still only pray might know many blessings and much prosperity.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DAY-DREAM.

'Sooner or later they must know it all, so the sooner we come to an understanding with the women about all this the better,' Edgar Talbot said to his brother when they found themselves at the extreme end of the slip, with Mr. Bathurst so far in advance of them as to justify them in no longer feigning an interest in his performances with the bay mare he designed for his cousin. Mr. Talbot, as it will be seen, did in no way seek to involve any other than himself in the tangle of wrecked fortune and strained responsibility in which he was caught. Still he did find it a slight 'something to lean upon,' that knowledge he had that in the coming explanation Lionel would be near to aid him verbally, at any rate.

'Sooner or later they must know it all, therefore the sooner the better,' Lionel answered, and in that answer there was a touch more of poetical feeling than of sound common sense. For a time—say only for a few days—matters might with safety have stood where they were. No one could be benefited by any immediate and absolute declaration of the necessity for a complete change, and it was well within the bounds of possibility that some might be worsted by it. 'Trixy will be my charge still—that, of course; but she must rough it. When she came to me I hoped to give her a good establishment until she gained one for herself. Now all that is at an end; still she is my charge, and I shall fulfil it.'

'You will let me help you?' the younger brother asked.

'No. As things have turned out, I can take no man's help with regard to Trixy. I, who have done her the injury through my over zeal, must be the one to make her amends; besides, she would still be within sound and sight of that fellow, if she cast in her lot with you, and she, like me, will be better away from them altogether.'

Then the brothers spoke of Trixy's too evident love for the man who

loved Blanche Lyon better than their sister—spoke of it delicately and with reserve, and in a way that proved to each that the other felt the common family honour to be his very tender care, and finally came to the conclusion that, since nothing better could be devised, it would be well to leave Haldon without delay.

But not to go back to London. The man who had lived in luxury there shrank from taking his sister back to some draughty suburb to live in cheap obscurity. 'If it were not for this about Blanche, I could desire nothing safer and better for Trixy than to live on with Mrs. Lyon; but that will hardly do now—Trixy could not stand it.'

'Neither of the girls could stand it if Miss Lyon marries Bathurst,' Lionel suggested. 'Miss Lyon is a quicksighted woman, and a tender-hearted woman; she would never agree to testing poor Trixy cruelly; but we are, after all, arguing on insufficient grounds; we do not know that Blanche cares for Frank; that gracious manner of hers is shown to us all alike.'

'She made no secret of caring for him,' Edgar replied, emphatically; 'she spoke as plainly as a woman can speak; far more plainly than a woman ought to speak.' Then he bent his head down and brooded over the words she had uttered, and was as sick at heart in his angry outspoken love and wrath, as was Lionel, whose hopes had been raised with far more cause. There was no unselfish consolation to Mr. Talbot in the thought that the woman he loved was escaping a black, barren-looking fate by refusing to marry him. He had a theory that such love as was his to give was all-sufficient to brighten the darkest road to any woman. Therefore now he girded against Blanche for leaving him to travel it alone.

'She made no secret of caring for him—she spoke more plainly than a woman ought to speak.' Lionel listened to these words with a deep conviction that they were ringing the knell of happiness for him. Last night that sweet graciousness of hers made his future seem so bright, his work so noble, his aim

so lofty, his prospects so many! Now he knew that it had been shown to him because he was Frank Bathurst's friend. Many women being imbued with the amiable, though weak notion, that it recommends them to Damon to be agreeable to Pythias.

'Have you thought of letting Trixy go to Marian for a time?' Lionel asked.

'Not while I'm alive and in authority; moreover, Marian will not be too likely to stretch out a helping hand just now, for this last business has dipped Sutton considerably, and she will be sure to attribute his reverses to me; no! until her daughter's altered prospects causes Mrs. Lyon to take a gorgeous tone I shall take it for granted that she remains Trixy's chaperone. I shall get into harness at once myself, and then I shall know what arrangements I can make for them.'

Then Lionel urged once more that they should stand or fall together, bringing forward, in support of his claim to help, that the mistress he served rewarded her honest votaries in a right royal way; and still the head of the house refused the cadet's claim, and declared his intention manfully of sufficing to himself and his sister.

But although Mr. Talbot would share this actual practical responsibility with no man, so long as it could be considered his property, he still did shrink from the more puerile duty of telling his sister that he had been shortsighted or luckless rather. To Blanche Lyon he had told it out boldly—not being altogether unconscious that there was something inspiring and touching in the manner of his telling it. Blanche Lyon was very much endowed with the love of all that is chivalric and daring, and there was something very daring in Mr. Talbot's tale and the tone in which he had told it. As she had said to him, if she had not already loved another man better she could have found it in her heart to love him very well indeed. She was sympathetic to that power he possessed of bearing the worst, and bearing it buoyantly not stolidly, and he knew that she was

thus sympathetic, and so he was able to speak out to her as became a man.

But with Trixy he felt very differently. Truth to tell, he knew little more of his sister than that she had lovely violet eyes, and a large luxurious figure, and a lady-like bearing that entitled him to hope that she would marry very well. He was proud of her, to a certain degree he was fond of her, but he was not at all acquainted with the tone of her character or the turn of her mind. She had been a delightful sister to him while he had been well off, and hoping to be still better off. But whether or not she had it in her to bear of such a reverse as he had to tell her of without looking crushed and reproachful he did not know.

So it was borne in upon him, partly by reason of his selfishness, and partly out of that natural dislike to the sight of tears which most men have, that it would be well for him to so far avail himself of that offer of fraternal service which Lionel had made, as to make the latter the messenger of evil to Trixy. 'As you were saying, the sooner they all know it now the better,' he remarked. 'I don't mind your telling Trixy this morning; we shall not go back to Victoria Street; if she has a preference for any particular part of the country it will be as well that I should know it before we leave here, and then I may manage it for her.'

'The telling will come better from you, I fancy,' Lionel replied, in all simplicity, not because he shirked the unpleasant duty, but because he really thought that it would be better for Edgar to receive the solace of Trixy's sorrow and sympathy with him at first hand. Then Mr. Talbot, being too proud and stubborn to ask a second time directly for what he had indirectly attempted to bring about, said, 'Perhaps you are right,' and went

back to Haldon in no pleasant mood.

He left Lionel still leaning against the hurdle at one end of the slip, dreaming a day dream—a dream that was incongruous in such a place at such a time. For the glories of summer were over the land now. The odours of wild thyme and roses, of mignonette from many a sheltered garden, of clover from many a shelving field, of meadow-sweet from the banks of the purling stream, the ever-sounding ripples of which permeated everything; all these fragrances mingled and intensified themselves in the golden sun-fraught air, and were wafted around and about him by a sighing western wind. And the grass under his feet was green, thick, and springy; and the sky above him was bright and decked graciously for the eyes with fleecy clouds of silver grey; and the bee hummed an accompaniment to the air the stream sang; and the world was as full of beauty as the man's heart was full of care.

So in the bosom of that gorgeous mother, at the shrine of the god whom all artists adore, at the feet of that royal mistress who never spurns a loving slave, so here alone with Nature, Lionel Talbot dreamt his day-dream, and it was something after this wise.

'The spell she wove in idleness for Frank, she has wrought in reality and bitterness for me.

"No woman's love shall light on me,
No woman's heart be mine."

The sun shone on still, and the lark sang, and the bee hummed, and the river rippled just as though God's grandest creation, man, had not been making man's most unnatural vow. In the utterance of those two lines, Lionel was binding himself to celibacy in the event of Blanche Lyon marrying any other than himself. Meanwhile Blanche Lyon and Frank Bathurst were coming to an understanding!



BOATING LIFE AT OXFORD.

CHAPTER III.

A BUMP SUPPER.

OXFORD suppers in general are of a very festive character. Breakfasts, even with the addition of champagne, are dull in Oxford, as everywhere else; 'wines' are solemn festivals, usually unfestive; but suppers are thoroughly enjoyable. At supper stiffness and restraint vanish in the steam of whisky punch, and joviality and good feeling are spread around with the fumes of the tobacco. Take an illustration. Two men of different Colleges meet, we will suppose at wine; they have known each other by sight for two or three years, and have perhaps met once or twice before on similar occasions. They find themselves seated close together with a bottle of port between them. Now watch their behaviour. They eye one another furtively for the first five minutes, then one ventures a remark; very gradually they enter into conversation, and as the port circulates discuss the merits of the 'Varsity and the Derby favourites with tolerable warmth and freedom. But next day they will probably meet and pass one another with the same furtive glance with which they met the evening before. Now let those men face each other at the supper table; let them applaud the same speeches, join in the same choruses, drink of the same liquor, and smoke the same tobacco, and you will see them presently hobnobbing together, proposing each other's health, and shaking hands over 'Auld Lang Syne,' as if they had been 'chums' from their youth up; and if they meet next day, there will be a greeting between them of some sort, not perhaps a cordial 'Hail-fellow-well-met,' but a quiet nod of recognition at any rate.

So suppers alone deserve to be called festive, and therefore, to celebrate a College success and express College joy, what so proper and so effective as a College supper? Such was always the feeling in St.

Anthony's, and now that our Torpid had so far distinguished itself as to make three bumps, and rise to the second place on the river, a Bump Supper was a matter of course.

However we always did these things in a constitutional way at St. Anthony's; so Hallett called a meeting, and proposed that the College should do honour to the Torpid crew by giving them a supper, which was unanimously agreed to.

'I propose, then,' said Hallett, 'that we ask Mr. Maclean if he will be good enough to cater for us; he knows what a good supper means better than most of us, and we shall be sure to have our liquors of the right sort if Mr. Maclean has the choosing of them.'

Maclean expressed his willingness to accept the honourable task, and intimated privately to his immediate neighbours that he would back himself at evens to name the vintage of any wine they liked to put before him, and that champagne and Moselle were his peculiar forte.

'We must leave the amount of expenditure to Mr. Maclean,' went on Hallett, 'and when we know what it is, share it amongst us. I hope every one in the College will subscribe, and come to the supper, and help to make it as jolly a one as possible.'

So the matter was settled, and Maclean set to work to make arrangements with great gusto.

St. Anthony's was not a large College; we had rather over sixty men, and some four or five of these belonged to the species known in Oxford by the name of 'smugs,' a race of which specimens exist in every College in Oxford, and which is not likely at present to become extinct.

They are a race who live apart, as far as Oxford life permits, and appear to take an interest in nothing particular, and certainly not in things in general. They have not,

as far as can be ascertained, any object in life, nor can it be conjectured what object they were intended to serve, especially in Oxford. They are observed usually to herd together, to wear hair and beards of an eccentric pattern, and attire of an uncertain period, varying in tint from black to snuff colour. St. Anthony's, I say, was blest with four or five of these curious creatures, and of course bumps and bump suppers were things of no interest to them. However, Hallett thought that on such an occasion they ought at least to be invited, so Maclean went round and asked them. He came back to Hallett in a state of great disgust.

'Confound those fellows!' he said. 'Why the deuce did you send me to such infernal holes for? I never was in any of them before, or I wouldn't have gone. Why I've just been to that fellow Daniels, and there he is sitting, Daniel in the den of lions, that is, of course there are no lions, but there's a monkey, and an owl, and two mongrel puppies, and the den's a perfect copy of the original, and ugh! the smell!'

'Well, he's the worst,' replied Hallett; 'they're not all as bad as that; but what did he say?—is he coming?'

'Coming? No, of course he isn't. I rapped out the invitation as fast as I could, for I couldn't stand the monkey; but he said "Much obliged, but he didn't go to suppers, and he didn't take an interest in boating." So I said, "Thank you," and bolted, and I'll lay heavy odds he never sees me in the doorway again.'

'Well, you've done your duty at any rate,' said Hallett, with a quiet chuckle.

'Yes, and some works of super—what I've call 'em into the bargain. I'll tell you what,' said Maclean, as they parted, 'it's my opinion that the existence of Smugs throws considerable light on the question of the origin of species; they're a much better link between man and brute than the gorilla.'

It was at first settled that leave should be asked to have the supper

in the hall; but as the Smugs were not coming, and as four or five men who had failed two or three times before in 'Smalls,' being anxious to avoid a similar mishap again, had also reluctantly declined to be present, Maclean thought that, on the whole, the thing would be more enjoyable if held in his own rooms, the largest in College.

Accordingly, on the appointed evening a little before nine o'clock about fifty men wended their way to Mr. Maclean's rooms, prepared to 'make a night of it.'

The room in which we were to be entertained was large, but not lofty; the walls panelled with oak, with two bayed and mullioned windows on two sides of the room, curtained with red. On the walls were some of the popular prints of the day, with several of a sporting character, and a portrait of Mr. Maclean's favourite hunter, with that gentleman, in unexceptionable pink and tops, on his back. At one end of the room over the mantelpiece was a large mirror; at the other end was a sort of trophy of the chase, consisting of a fox's mask and two brushes, surmounting a huge pair of bison's horns, about which whips, hunting-crops, spurs, &c., gracefully dangled. Tables were stretched along the four sides of the room, leaving room at two corners for the 'scouts' in attendance to pass to and fro between the outer door and the inner room. Just inside the latter was posted the band, variously known as Tyrolese, Polish, and German, under the direction of the renowned Schlappoffski. Oysters, lobsters, beef, pies, fowls, and all sorts of cold eatables of a substantial nature covered the tables, and bottles of champagne and Moselle stood sentry over every dish ready to let fly and announce that the attack had begun.

'Come up here, my lad,' sung out Baxter, as I entered the room, and was proceeding to take a humble place among some other freshmen; 'all the Torpid sit up here, and I want you by me.' He was seated on Hallett's right in the middle of the longest table, which was the place of honour. 'It's the first

supper you've been at, isn't it?" said Baxter. "Well, I'll give you a bit of advice. Don't drink too much porter with your oysters, beware of punch, and stick to the "fiz."

"Fiz?" I said, inquiringly.

"Yes, fizzing liquors, you know; they don't leave headache and "hot coppers" behind, which punch does."

"Hot coppers?" I said again.

"Well, my infant, as the French say, you *are* fresh. Don't you know how your mouth feels in the morning after a little too much smoke and liquor the night before? No, of course you don't, but you will to-morrow, I dare say. You smoke, don't you?"

"Yes, a little."

"Ah! well, make the most of your weed: you'd be uncomfortable if you didn't smoke at all, and you'll be still more uncomfortable if you smoke too much."

I could see that Wingfield, who sat a little way down the other side of the table, was taking in these observations of Baxter's with all his ears, and evidently determining to make the most of them for his own use.

"Are all the Torpid here?" inquired Hallett. "We won't wait for anybody else."

"All here now," replied Vere, as he entered, as usual the last man.

"Well," exclaimed Tip, "I thought Mr. Vere would be in time to-night for once."

"Yes, I am Vere-y late," returned Vere, quietly, "but you see—"

"Well, gentlemen," interposed Hallett, "as everybody's here, we may as well fall to."

The hint was taken at once, and oysters, lobsters, &c., began to vanish at a marvellous rate. Then commenced the popping of corks, much resembling the 'file-firing from the right of companies' with which Volunteers are familiar. The band struck up, and so did chaff and laughter from all sides, and between that and the clatter of knives and forks, the jingling of glasses, and the firing of corks, the table was soon in something like a roar.

"Robert!" shouted Baxter to one of the scouts who was rushing about

with champagne in a state of the most gleeful excitement, "Robert, you old duffer, come here."

"Yes, sir," returned Robert, putting his hand to his ear to catch the order in the midst of the din.

"Ask Mr. Percy to take wine with me," shouted Baxter.

Off went old Robert with another grin.

"Mr. Percy, sir,—Mr. Baxter—pleasure of a glass of wine, sir."

"All right," said Tip, filling his glass; "health, old fellow!"

Thereupon the rest of the room followed suit; everybody drank to everybody else, and, "Pleasure of a glass of wine," "Looks towards you," "Health, old fellow," "Here's to you," &c., went across the tables in every direction for the next ten minutes. By this time we had nearly appeased our appetites, and were ready for a song, so, while the relics of the feast were being cleared away, Schlappoffski, or as he was familiarly called, "Slap," came forward, and sang, in broken English, one of the popular comic songs of the day, which was vociferously applauded, chiefly because everybody wanted an opportunity to make as much noise as possible. By the time it was over, the punch was on the table, steaming hot, and spreading that soothing and delicious fragrance which makes it the most seductive of all liquors that rejoice the heart of man. Boxes of cigars, pipes, and jars of tobacco also made their appearance; and when each man had lit his pipe or his weed, and filled his glass, Hallett rose to propose the first toast of the evening.

"Gentlemen," said Hallett, "I take it for granted that we all wish good health to the Queen and her royal family [hear, hear], so I shall proceed forthwith to propose the principal toast of the evening, I mean our gallant Torpid [cheers and energetic rattling of glasses on the table, and heels on the floor, continued for some minutes]. I've seen a good many Torpids in my time," said Hallett, "but I never saw any for pluck and perseverance and real good training to beat the St. Anthony's Torpid of this year [Renewed cheers, rattling of glasses,

and thunder of heels]. We had our usual "St. Anthony's luck" at the beginning of term. We lost some of the men we had reckoned on, and had to put new men into the boat; but by dint of their own hard grind, the crew came to be one of the best on, and you've all seen the result [cheers and noises as before]. I'm sure no one who saw those three bumps, especially that glorious one on the first day [Hurrah and tremendous cheering], will ever forget it: I shall not for one. We shall never forget Bow's form, his straight back, and his easy finish; he's the prettiest oar I've seen, except dear old Thornhill [Loud hear, hear, during which Bow was smitten on the back by everybody within reach]; and we won't forget old "Two" [hear, hear], how he was always late, ["Ha, ha," all round and a quiet smile from Vere], and how, when we did get him into the boat, he did his work from end to end, and was never known to shirk [cheers]; and we won't forget how "Three" tried for a month to get his back straight, and did it at last ["Bravo Three!"]; and how "Four" was rather lazy in training, but came out strong in the races [cheers, and "So you did, Four, my boy"]; and we won't forget how "Five's" oar came through with a "rug" that made the water foam [great cheering], and "Six" looked as if he meant to pull the boat by himself, and "Seven," with his long back and broad chest, reaching out, and picking up the time like clockwork [cheers]; and, if we forget everybody else, there's one man we'll remember, and that's "Stroke" [cheers—glasses and heels at it again, while Baxter patted me on the back with such warmth that I was obliged to remonstrate]. He was a freshman this term," continued Hallett, "but I don't mind saying, that his steady rowing and plucky spurts would have done credit to the oldest oar in Oxford, and I hope to see him some day in the winning boat on the Putney water [loud hear, hear, and "Well rowed, Stroke"]; and now, gentlemen, though last, and I'm bound

to say, *least*, we won't forget our cox. [Cheers, at which Wingfield did not attempt to conceal his gratification]. He's a freshman, too, and I think for the first month, as usual with a new cox., he got, so to speak, "more kicks than half-pence;" however, he stuck to it, and I'll say, with all due deference to Mr. Percy ["All right, old fellow," from Tip], that in six months' time he'll be as well able to take a boat from Putney Bridge to the Ship at Mortlake as any cox. on the Oxford river [Hear, hear, and cheers]. And now, gentlemen, that we've cheered them all separately, let's cheer them all in a lump. Here's to the St. Anthony's Torpid and the three bumps.'

All stood up, glass in hand, except the heroes of the toast: the band struck up and everybody sang "For they are jolly good fellows," &c., which was succeeded by tremendous volleys of cheers, in which the scouts, headed by old Robert, joined with all their lungs. Then everybody tossed off his punch, and 'No heel-taps,' was the cry all round. 'Stroke, my boy, your health,' 'Stroke, health, old fellow,' 'Five, your health,' 'Cox,' 'Wingfield,' 'Stroke,' 'Maynard,' 'Bow, health, old boy,' and so on till the men dropped down one by one into their seats, and there was something like a calm once more.

'Beg to call on Mr. Maclean for a song,' said Hallett, rising immediately.

'Hear, hear,' from all sides, and Maclean, after a good deal of encouragement from his immediate neighbours, and pulls at the punch, gave us 'A hunting we will go' with great vigour, warming up, as we joined him in the chorus, flourishing his glass in one hand, and his pipe in the other, and shouting 'For a hunting we will go, my boys, a hunting we will go,' in a state of the greatest enthusiasm, finishing up at last with a 'View-holloa' of the most vigorous description.

After that I found I had to return thanks, which turned out easier than I had expected, and then everybody called out 'Now then, Maclean, it's your call.'

'I know,' said Macleane; 'I think I can't do better than call on the celebrated comic singer, Mr. Vere, for a song.'

'Hear, hear,' shouted Baxter; 'he's awfully good,' he added aside to me, 'beats Mackney and those fellows all to nothing. Now then, Vere, strike up, old man.'

So Vere, with a very dismal face, began an extremely comic song, which sent me into fits of laughter, and gave Baxter inexpressible delight. I forget what the song was, but I know there were some imitations of a grandmother and four or five children that were intensely amusing. As soon as it was over we struck up the inevitable chorus well known to every Oxford man—

'Jolly good song, jolly well sung,

Jolly companions every one;

Put on your nightcaps, keep yourselves warm,

A little more liquor will do you no harm.'

Then more toasts were proposed, and more songs sung. 'The Cricket Club,' 'The Eight,' 'The Hunting Interest,' 'The Volunteers,' 'The men who had taken honours in the Schools,' all had their turn. At last Baxter gave 'The Ladies,' in terms of the highest gallantry, which was greeted with 'Here's a health to all good lasses,' &c.

Before it was over, Macleane, who had had rather more punch than his head would carry, was on his legs to return thanks. 'Gentlemen,' said Macleane, in an impressive tone, 'being—I venture to think—a general favourite with the fair sex.'

'Sit down, you old ass,' said Tip, who sat near him; 'who asked you to return thanks?'

'Mr. Tip,' rejoined Macleane, in a tone of serious rebuke, 'your conduct is un-ladylike, I mean un—'

'Now do go to bed, there's a good fellow.'

'Gentlemen!' continued Macleane, ignoring the last remonstrance, 'Mr. Tip—considers, that I ought not—to return—to return to the subject: but, gentlemen, the ladies—being—if I may so speak, our own—our guiding stars, will—do—can—'

At this point the door opened, and a head wearing a long nose,

and sharp, though fishy eyes, was thrust in. It was Dick Harris, the College messenger. The head was immediately assailed with missiles from all parts of the room.

'Get out, Dick, what the deuce do you want?'

'Oh, let's have him in,' said Baxter. 'Here, Dick, have some grog.'

'Thankee, sir,' and Dick polished off a tumbler of strong punch, in a way that showed that it was no new beverage to him.

'Now then, Dick,' said Baxter, 'let's see if you know the article on Predestination.'

'No, no,' interposed Hallett, 'let's have a bit of Cicero. Go on; let's hear you pitch into Catiline.'

Dick began at once, with great emphasis and volubility, 'How long, O Catiline, will you abuse our patience?' &c., and went on for about half a page.

'That's enough, Dick; now let's see if you can return thanks for the ladies; Mr. Macleane can't quite manage it.'

'All right, sir. Gentlemen, whenever I hear speak of returning thanks for the ladies, I always think as how I ought to return thanks for my old woman at home. She's a sort of a Rebecca to me, you know, gentlemen, and I hope I aint a bad Isaac; whenever she knows as there's going to be a festive meeting, like this ere, in College, says she to me, "Dick," she says, "I hope you won't go to forget yourself." ["And you never do," ironically from Baxter.] "And I never do, sir, and when I go home, as it might be now you know, sir, she says, "Ah, Dick," she says, "what a blessin' it is as you always come 'ome sober." [Oh, oh, and laughter: for Dick was generally 'overcome' twice a week at least]; and so you see, gentlemen, I know the valyer of the ladies, and, as the ladies stands up for me, I stands up for them, and—beg pardon, gentlemen,' said Dick, changing his tone, 'the Dean sends his compliments, and he hopes you won't keep it up no longer, for it's near two o'clock, and he can't get to sleep, he says.'

'Oh, hang the Dean.' 'Ask him in.' 'Tell him to put another

nightcap on,' were the exclamations all round.

'Well, I suppose it's about time we broke up,' said Hallett; 'we'll have one more jolly good chorus, and then stop. What shall it be?'

'A hunting we will go,' said Macleane.

'No, no, can't do better than "Auld lang Syne," as usual,' said Barter. 'Come on; "Should auld acquaintance be forgot?"'

And off we went at the top of our voices, while Macleane, with his accompaniment of tumbler and pipe,

stuck manfully to 'A hunting we will go.'

And then we all retired, some straight and some by rather crooked paths, to our respective rooms. I believe my footsteps wavered a little when I got into the cold night air; but I walked up stairs, lit my candle, and wound up my watch without much difficulty, so I suppose my head was not particularly muddled. But next morning I knew the meaning of 'Hot coppers,' and had no reason to regret that Bump Suppers were a comparative rarity.

WATCHING A WINDOW.

THE bar of red in the amber west
Burns to ashes, and all is grey,
Though a sickle-moon is glittering out
Through the haze of the dying day.

There is no light from the sickle-moon,
And fast the pearly greys grow dead,
And the trees grow black, and the flowers dim,
Till the beauty of all has fled.

And the passion-flowers that—moonlight hued—
Tangle and twine, with starry grace,
About a window on which I gaze,
Even these will the night efface.

Already the wine-red curtains drawn,
Hide the room with their ruddy glow,
And the face is gone that whitely gazed
At the sunset an hour ago.

Gone! Ah, no; as I speak there streams
A shaft of light athwart the gloom;
The dew-wet laurels beneath it gleam,
And the flowers, returning, bloom.

She had come again, and with either hand
The silken damask holds apart,
And full in the streaming light she stands,
Troubled of eye and heart.

Full in the softening light, that makes
A glory round her, like a saint,
I see the form that is Art's despair,
And a face that no words can paint.



Drawn by Adelaide Claxton.]

WATCHING A WINDOW.

[See the Poem.

She watches and waits for one who stays,
For one beloved she looks in vain ;
And the big black eyes are full of tears,
And the child-mouth quivers with pain.

Passionful longing, and not reproach,
Steals the blood from her rounded cheek ;
And sadness, born of the hungering heart
That suffers, and dare not speak.

'The hours drag on, oh, love of my heart!
Wearily on, and you are not here :
A hundred terrors oppress my brain ;
I am sick to swooning with fear.

'It is not doubt, oh, life of my life!
Oh, truest, and fondest, and best ;
But I am a woman, and womanly fears
Tear and distract my breast.'

So I tancy her murmuring low ;
Yet the while with her wistful eyes
She gazes into the garden's gloom,
And up at the darkening skies.

The sickle-moon has the gleam of gold
In the deepening blue above ;
She thinks, 'It shines not for me alone ;
It is shining on him I love.'

But hark! What echo the silence breaks ?
What sound, when all sound seemed dead ?
Her cheek is changing from red to white,
And flushing from white to red ;

And the big eyes glisten. Yet these alone
Are the sounds on my ears that grate,—
Hasty footsteps spurning the road,
And a hand on the garden gate.

W. S.



MR. FAIRWEATHER'S YACHTING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'YACHTING ROUND THE WEST OF ENGLAND.'

CHAPTER III.

ONE morning, about a week after our arrival, I was surprised to find on entering the sitting-room, that the cloth was not laid for breakfast, and my wife soon after called me to say that she had been ringing for Simpkins to come to her, without success, for the last half-hour. On hearing this, I determined to try the awakening power of the sitting-room bell, and plied it so vigorously, that no one within a hundred yards of the house could have had the assurance to assert they had not heard it. The appeal was too urgent to be neglected, and produced Simpkins, who came running up breathless, and big with intelligence. She expressed herself somewhat incoherently.

'Oh! ma'am, I beg your pardon, —I beg your pardon for keeping you waiting—but—it has given me such a turn—I really could not come before.'

Here she pressed her hand on her side, and looked as though she were about to fall, or explode.

'What is it, Simpkins?' cried my wife, in alarm. 'Speak! Arethusa——?'

'No, it isn't her, ma'am. Miss Arethusa's all right—it's Louise—Louise, the maid—her as attends on you here!'

'What of her?' asked my wife—relieved, but interested.

'Well, ma'am, I may as well begin from the beginning. As I were a-passing the door at seven o'clock this morning,—it might have been ten minutes past seven, for I was a little late, I generally get up when I hear the clock strike six, but I didn't hear it this morning. I don't hold much to them French clocks——'

'—Never mind the clocks,' I interposed. 'What about Louise?'

'Well, sir, it was about ten minutes after seven, as I was a-passing the sitting-room door, I saw

it open. So says I to myself, "What! has master left the sitting-room door open?" and I just went to look in, when, who should I see but Louise, lying in an arm-chair with her broom beside her. Oh! but she did look dreadful bad, sir, all like a corpse a'most, and I felt the cold shivers come over me. "Louise!" says I, and she opened her eyes, "whatever is the matter?" She shook her head but made no answer. I was so frightened, and I thought of the cholera, which is about the town; so I runs and calls Mons., Madame Clement, and Madame Clement's mother, and Marie, and Adolphe, and they carries her up to bed; and we've been rubbing her with brandy, and now a doctor's sent for.'

My wife, somewhat uneasy at Simpkins' suggestion of the cholera, sent for Madame Clement immediately after breakfast. It was some time before she and her husband arrived, but when they did, they at once satisfied us that the illness was not infectious; and the mistress in a few words explained to my wife the real cause of the poor girl's wretched condition.

But what had become of the infant? That was the next question; and it was one at which the master of the house became livid. He begged us to be silent, and to keep the matter quiet. He knew that the French police were inexorable. Were any suspicion raised they would search every cranny and corner, tear down the fire-places, turn out the wine-cellars—uproot the house to its very foundations. He saw nothing before him but public exposure, and his guests migrating from his hotel *en masse*. He bemoaned himself as the most unfortunate of landlords, and the miseries of Louise appeared to him to be lost in his own impending ruin.

Louise would give no information about the infant. In vain the old grandmother exhausted her softest blandishments, by the bed-side; in vain the landlord gesticulated at the door. Chance, fortunately, brought to light what entreaty could not elicit. One of the housemaids, on opening a china-closet adjoining our sitting-room, discovered the little object of search wrapped up in one of our dinner-napkins. The good news spread like wildfire; every one felt relieved, especially the master of the house. The only circumstance which marred his satisfaction was, that the child was not found alive. This entailed two difficulties; the first was soon disposed of, for the family doctor gave a certificate to say that death occurred from natural causes immediately after birth. The second was of a religious nature; it was necessary that the child should have been baptized to entitle it to Christian burial. The same rule holds good in the English Church, but, whereas the Romanists enforce it strictly and to the letter, our ministers charitably refrain from asking questions, out of consideration for the feelings of parents and relations. The Roman Church, however, while it renders the rite obligatory, affords greater facilities for its administration. Laymen are allowed to officiate, and in this case a visitor in the hotel who had accidentally become acquainted with the circumstances, threw some water over the infant, and certified to the authorities that it had been duly baptized. The priests arrived the next morning and removed the body, chanting the solemn services, and preceded by white-robed torchbearers; and this little traveller was conducted to his last resting-place with as much ceremony, and with the same offices of the Church, as if he had lived to a ripe old age and died full of years and honours. There was only one difference: there were no mourners; poor little Louis Fleury had no one to follow him to his long home. He had but one to lament him, and she could not be present; but she followed him in heart though not in person, and was a more sincere mourner

than any he would have had though he had died a patriot and his bier had been borne by senators, and crowned with the garlands of glory.

All cause for anxiety seemed now removed, and Louise was attended with unremitting care. But imagine what a shock our feelings received when, three days afterwards, the little coffin reappeared accompanied by a file of police. They marched into the hotel, choked up the hall and gateway, through which all the visitors passed, with their long swords and cocked-hats. M. Clement could not believe that they were not intentionally prominent. Such an exhibition would have brought disgrace on a private house—to a hotel it threatened ruin. The *gens d'armes*, however, would listen to no remonstrances, but two of them demanded to be shown into Louise's room, while the remainder were left to keep guard at the door. Louise was, of course, in a very feeble state, and the poor thing trembled like an aspen leaf on hearing the dreadful tidings. But the emissaries of the law seemed to possess neither compassion nor delicacy. They clanked up the stairs, stalked into the middle of the room, demanded whether her name was that in their warrant, and then ordered her to rise instantly and prepare to accompany them. In vain she, and kind Madame Clement, prayed that she might at least be allowed to dress herself in private, promising to be ready in a few minutes. They refused to make any concession; and it was through such humiliation as this that she was rudely borne to prison. What could she expect from a police who had treated even their own queen with similar brutality?

I happened to be standing in the passage when she was brought down, and I never saw her look more noble. Her complexion seemed as white and her features as sharply cut as though she had been marble, and the indignities she had suffered had given her a dauntless, almost a defiant expression. I could not avoid addressing a word of comfort to her, as she stood between those grim, hard-looking officials.

'Louise,' I said, 'may God protect you!'

She looked round, made no reply, but, burying her face in her hands, burst into tears. A word of kindness can touch the heart, which no indignities can conquer.

After her departure, and after soothing my wife's sorrow for poor Louise, and indignation at the brutal treatment she had met with, even admitting her guilt, I sought our landlord to inquire what had been the cause of this visit of the police. He said he feared the servants in the house had been talking about the affair outside, and the carpenter who made the coffin, and perhaps some of the female neighbours, had been too inquisitive, and so the unfortunate occurrence had come round to the knowledge of the authorities.

We took so much interest in the fate of Louise, standing, in the pride of youth and strength, on the very brink of death, accused of a crime which might lead her to execution, and that by the guillotine, with all its revolting associations, that my wife applied for permission to visit her in prison. This, after some formalities had been complied with, was granted, and the day and hour fixed. I supposed that I should have been allowed to accompany her, although my name was not inserted in the permit; but I found that I was mistaken, as the police regulations were stringent upon the subject. Emily felt, naturally, very nervous at the thought of traversing the dark, narrow passages alone with her grim escort, but she determined not to be deterred from her charitable undertaking. The French police are a severe, morose set of men, and have none of those pretty ways which makes the London 'blue' so acceptable in the public-house and so irresistible on the area step. They seem to have no feelings in common with the rest of mankind; and my wife felt an involuntary chill pass over her as she gazed at their hardened, inflexible features, and thought how little consideration poor Louise could expect from them in her desolate and appalling position.

While thoughts such as these

were passing through her mind, she found herself in a small chamber or rather closet, into which a little aperture near the ceiling scarcely admitted the light of day. On one side was a double-grating, so contrived by means of the close interlacing of the bars, and the distance between the two iron barriers, that it would have been almost impossible to transmit any article through it. Emily gave an involuntary shudder as the gaoler proceeded to shut and double-lock the door behind her. She felt almost deprived of breath in such a narrow, dismal cell, and begged that it might not be entirely closed. The functionary merely replied that he must obey his orders, and shot the massive bolts. Then passing round to the other side of the grating, he unlocked a gate, which, as it groaned upon its hinges, discovered a yard beyond, secured at every point of access by heavy iron gratings. Within this ill-omened precinct sat several squalid, repulsive-looking women, in moody silence or fitful conversation, and at one side my wife recognised Louise, standing aloof from the rest, and easily distinguishable by her superior mien, by the neatness of her dress, and the whiteness of her country cap. She was motionless, and looked inexpressibly sad, as if overcome by a sense of her degradation. It is surprising what an effect is produced by the mere consciousness of being in prison, even upon those who are so undeservedly. There must be something in its mere atmosphere which seems to convey a taint.

The statue-like girl started with a look of terror as the gaoler thundered out from the iron door, 'Louise Fleury.' She came forward trembling; but as she entered the passage and saw my wife on the other side of the grating, she seemed reassured; but, unable to restrain her grief, burst into a paroxysm of sobs and tears. My wife said, in gentle terms, that the object of her visit was not to aggravate her sorrow, but to bring consolation; to hope that her innocence of the foul charge might be proved, and to

knew what she wished to have in the way of clothes, or such little gifts as were allowed to the unfriended prisoners. Poor Louise was very anxious that her mistress should take charge of her box, in which were some little trinkets she valued, and also that her thimble and needles and thread should be sent to her, as though the prison authorities provided work, they did not provide the means of doing it. Emily then asked her whether since her imprisonment she had heard from the individual who had been the cause of all her misery.

Her face flushed with indignation as she emphatically replied, 'No; he has never written nor inquired since.'

'Does he know the position in which you are placed?'

'He knows it, but does not care, provided he is not troubled.'

She spoke with so much emotion, and at the same time so much reserve on this subject, that my wife refrained from making further inquiries as to any marriage having taken place. On one point Louise was inflexible: suffer what she might, she would never betray the name of the unworthy individual she had once loved so devotedly.

'You have parents?' continued Emily. 'They have written to you?'

'No,' she said; 'they do not know where I am. I left my place, and came to Calais unknown to my friends. What will become of me!' she exclaimed. 'If the worst does not happen, they will send me to the prison for women at Rennes for five years, and I shall then be cast forth without a home, or a character to procure me one.'

My wife was greatly affected; she reminded her that she should place her trust above. Moreover, that she had a good friend in Monsieur Clement, the master of the hotel, and that she herself would not forget her. At last Emily was reminded that the time allowed for the interview was past, and bade a sad farewell (perhaps for the last time) to one who, at the commencement of our short sojourn at Calais, had seemed, in the bloom and confidence of youth, to be looking forward to a long and happy life.

Our stay in France was now drawing to a close; but before leaving we added our mite to a subscription which had been set on foot for poor Louise in the hotel, that she should not be entirely penniless when discharged from prison. It amounted to about three hundred francs, and had to be put in trust for her, and her box of clothes to be inscribed with M. Clement's name to prevent its being appropriated by the authorities. My wife wrote a strong testimonial in her favour, to be presented on her trial, in addition to the evidence of the master and mistress of the house on her behalf.

I must here digress a little from the order of events to add, that during the winter the welcome intelligence arrived that Louise had been acquitted, and that she had been received back by the master of the hotel, partly from charitable motives, partly because he could nowhere find a more willing or efficient servant. Our stay in France had proved so agreeable that we proposed to visit Paris early next spring, and as we had to pass through Calais we determined to stop for the night, and take the opportunity of seeing Louise again. Emily observed to me, however, that she should treat her distantly, and not make a pet of one who had laid herself open to so grave a suspicion. Alas! we were never called upon to exercise our reserve. She had, indeed, returned to the hotel, but she could not undertake her former duties, for she shunned the light and the face of human kind. Her mistress kindly employed her in needlework in a back room into which no one else was allowed to enter, and where for several weeks she worked indefatigably. But the cold and damp of the prison had, in her then feeble state, laid the seeds of an incurable disease. She gradually drooped and languished, until she was unequal to any exertion, and although Madame Clement provided her with every comfort, she could not bear to be a burden, and requested to be removed to the hospital. There, after three days, she breathed her last, without a relation

to attend her, with no one beside her but the mistress of the hotel, whose heart had been touched by her misfortunes, and by the patience with which she had borne them. She sank back into a sweet sleep with her hopes fixed on heaven, and her expression, I was told, was as peaceful and serene as though she had been already an angel of light. It was perhaps for the best that she was removed from this censorious world. She is now beyond the reach of the slights and reproaches of man, and is gone to a more merciful Judge than any she would have had upon earth. Hood teaches us most beautifully how to bid farewell to such a child of sorrow:—

Cross her hands humbly
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast;
Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour.*

But to return to our narrative. At length the time of our departure arrived; everything was arranged, and thirty francs paid to the harbour authorities, in exchange for which I received a sheet of paper so embellished with crowns and eagles that I might have supposed I had received a patent of nobility. There is in the yachtsman's movements a pleasant uncertainty, as they depend upon the most variable of all things, wind and weather. But on this occasion we were fortunate, for on the day proposed the breeze was from the west, and the morning bright and genial. All was bustle as we passed out of the harbour, for the fishing-boats—quaint-looking, three-masted luggers, manned by the noisiest and most demonstrative of sailors—were also preparing to take advantage of the tide. As the little fleet sailed on its way under the breakwater, the rough seamen suddenly paused; every voice was hushed, every cap doffed. A priest, easily distinguishable by his broad hat and voluminous gown, had advanced to the edge of the pier; and, standing with outstretched arms, was invoking a blessing on the expedition. The scene was most impressive, and it was pleasing to

observe these men, whose lives were so often in their hands, recognizing the power by which they were preserved.

The sea continued calm until we opened Cape Griznez, which lies to the west of Calais, and acts as a breakwater against the waves of the Channel. Outside this point we began to pitch and roll very considerably. When we were near mid-channel we perceived a cloud and fall of rain darkening the western horizon, and the captain bade us prepare for a shower. As the squall approached nearer we found ourselves in a calm. The wind dropped completely, so that the sails flapped to and fro, and the topsail was ordered to be laced. The cloud, however, soon relieved us by passing off towards the coast of France. I had never seen the proverb that 'a lull precedes a storm' so strikingly illustrated. The breeze was soon as fresh as ever, and the water became rougher as we proceeded. The wind, moreover, had veered round towards the north, so that it was impossible to make Dover, and we shaped our course in the direction of the Downs. Shortly before reaching them the captain pointed to a little white line on the eastern horizon, which he said was the surf breaking on the Goodwin Sands.

'The Goodwin Sands!' Emily exclaimed in terror. 'The Goodwin Sands! That I should ever have ventured upon such an expedition. It is tempting Providence, Joseph. We shall never see our home again, and there is Arethusa standing in the wet in her thin boots. Simpkins, where are Miss Arethusa's clumps? How often have I—'

'It aint my fault, ma'am,' hiccuped Simpkins. 'Miss——'

'Not a word, Simpkins—not another word. Oh those dreadful Goodwin Sands! I see the sea breaking mercilessly upon them. We shall all be drowned. Now, Joseph, mind what I say. Arethusa is to be saved first, then you, then Simpkins, and I last of all.'

'But, my dear——'

'Now don't gainsay me. Simpkins, obey my orders. You are to be saved before me. She has some

to lament her—a sister in California. No one will care for my loss.'

In vain I endeavoured to alter my wife's resolution. At the same time our means of safety, under Emily's supposition that vessel and boat were lost, were of the slenderest description. They consisted of a hamper and bucket, the boathook and the mop: there was nothing else. According to my wife's arrangement, the mop would fall to her share. I endeavoured to persuade her to take the bucket or the boathook. I argued that her life was valuable on many accounts, and that it was her duty to preserve it. But all was of no avail. I could not shake her noble determination, so I resigned the boathook to Simpkins.

The line in the horizon was very soon out of sight. We had passed the South Foreland, and were entering the smoother water of the Downs. In two hours more we were anchored at Ramsgate, and the custom-house authorities were again alongside.

'You have had a rough passage, sir,' said the spokesman; 'but you have had a good wholesome craft under you; not so fast as some, perhaps,' glancing at the bow, 'but one that stands the sea; not a strip of a thing like a man's coffin.'

It was delightful to meet with civility where we expected rude inquiries and investigations. They offered to take us on shore in their boat, and paid us so many compliments on our vessel and seamanship that I felt quite ashamed at offering them only five shillings. The custom-house officials seldom examine yachts, and I believe the confidence they thus repose in the honour of owner is generally well founded.

Thus ended the grand expedition of our summer. We made several little excursions afterwards, but we look upon this as our most important and hazardous enterprise. Among the results which accrued from it was the unfortunate one of attaching a nickname to our boy Harry. It appears that James, during his stay in Calais, had, although a thorough British tar, been guilty of acquiring several French words, which he was constantly airing, and at the same time of betraying an

unmistakable affection for wines and liquors manufactured in France. One of his words was *tire-bouchon*, and as he was invariably in want of the corkscrew, he was constantly searching and asking for it both in French and English. On Harry's returning home to the little old village in Essex, all the neighbours were feign to hear of his adventures in foreign lands, and he gratified their curiosity to such an extent in relating all he had seen and done, that he came to be looked upon as the most wonderful boy that had ever lived. Among other things he said he could speak French, but whenever he was called upon to give a specimen of the language, he could remember no word but *tire-bouchon*. The other little village boys whose wits were sharpened by jealousy were quick enough to discover this, and they gave him the name of *Tire-bouchon* Smith, which he has borne ever since, and is likely to carry all his days.

The yacht was laid up for the winter at Gravesend, the rigging and stores were safely housed on shore, and the captain alone remained in charge. As spring approached, I consulted him about the forthcoming season, and observed that I intended to undertake more adventurous expeditions than heretofore. I could not have anticipated any difficulty in the way, for the seller of the yacht had assured me she had weathered gales in which steamers had been disabled, and Brown himself had avowed his willingness to sail in her to the West Indies and bring back a cargo of sugar. But, to my surprise, he looked very serious at my communication, said she was not large enough for the more exposed parts of the Channel, and that for such voyages as I contemplated I ought to have a vessel 'as big again.' I had already discovered that she scarcely afforded sufficient accommodation to be comfortable for any long period, and that she necessitated our sleeping on shore during our expeditions, thus entailing a double expense. Besides this, several renovations and additions were desirable in her, and it would be better to expend money on a vessel more per-

manently useful. I determined, therefore, to sell the *Zephyrina*, and was glad I had taken so much trouble in selecting her, as it was now likely to be repaid. I forthwith inserted the following in 'Bell's Life':—

'YACHT FOR SALE.—A twenty-five ton cutter, eight years old. Is strongly built, copper-fastened, and a first-rate sea-boat. Stove, boat, and cabin fittings new last year. Price moderate. Address "Neptunus," care of Mr. Salt, &c.'

I considered this to be a very taking advertisement, although I was convinced that so good a craft would be easily disposed of without any such expedient. I received five answers to it. Two were from agents, one of whom thought it highly probable he might obtain a purchaser, and inquired whether I should object to paying the usual commission; the other, a man of more experience, had, at that very moment, a gentleman requiring just such a vessel as I described, and requested that particulars might be forwarded immediately. Of the three remaining answers, one was from a country squire, residing at Greenfield Park, Shropshire, who had drawn up a most elaborate ostechium for my benefit, requiring a detailed account of the yacht from the time that her keel was laid down, and adding that if these questions were answered satisfactorily, he would undertake the journey to inspect her. The other two replies consisted of only a few lines, requesting permission to view. I returned answers to all, and fearing that the low price might excite suspicion, observed that I had named it from a desire to find an immediate purchaser. The sum I fixed was fifty pounds below what she had cost me, and as I had been informed that she was worth double what I had given, these appeared to me unusually moderate terms. The inquiries of my Arcadian friend I did not answer, for the good reason that I was unable to afford the desired information. I should, perhaps, have been more circumstantial, but that I supposed the vessel would be sold at once, but, as it was, merely sent

him references, and never heard from him again.

Agent No. 2 wrote after some delay to state that he had inspected *Zephyrina*, but that she was quite unsuitable for the gentleman to whom he had attended. He added that he had sold such a vessel the week before for half the price; but still, that these were a class of customers, an entirely different class, whom she might suit. No. 4 wrote the day after a very curt reply, to say he did not require an *old* vessel. I was at a loss to understand these letters. Such gratuitous impertinence must emanate from some senseless wags who were playing off on me their miserable pleasantries, or, which was more likely, from some designing rogues who imagined a yachtsman could be easily imposed upon. I did not condescend to reply to either. No. 5 sent me an offer, but his terms were somewhat remarkable with regard to payment. I was to receive, as an equivalent, a promissory note and a group of dancing figures. The note had been given by a gentleman whose property was in Chancery, but the work of art had been exhibited at the Great Exhibition, and valued by the sculptor at 500*l*. Now, distance does not, unfortunately, in the case of money, 'lend enchantment to the view,' and I knew too much about 'the law's delays' to look very favourably upon a security dependent upon a suit in Chancery. But with regard to the group, I own to having a little weakness for statuary, and I thought it would give a classic air to the staircase window; but on showing a sketch of it to my wife, she declared she had never seen anything so indelicate, and that such a thing should never come into her house. I was, therefore, compelled to refuse this elegant consideration.

Another advertisement was now inserted, but although I received several answers, there was no offer, and one of my correspondents had the incivility to write to me that he would not take a present of such a vessel. But meanwhile, a gentleman who had not seen the advertisement, had been inspecting her, and sent me an offer within twenty

pounds of the price I had named. It came from a gentleman who, the captain informed me, had been to visit the *Zephyrina* several times, and seemed highly pleased with her. He was, he added, a young gentleman, a rather wild-looking-gentleman, and when he went on board, he ran up and down the rigging, and worked away at the pumps, and, in short, carried on his examination with so much energy, that only for himself he would have been overboard more than once. I wrote in answer to his letter to say that I considered the price I had fixed very low, but that as he had offered a sum still smaller, our simplest plan would be to split the difference. His reply appeared to me somewhat evasive; he agreed to the terms, but did not wish to complete the purchase for six months. The letter, of which this was the purport, happened to be dated from the house of one of my old college friends, so I wrote to make a few inquiries about this somewhat incomprehensible customer. I found that he was a man of good social standing, but that he was negotiating with me under a false name, and it was generally supposed that his affairs were a little embarrassed. By the next post I received a note from him begging to be allowed to withdraw his offer altogether, a request to which, as it may be imagined, I made little difficulty in consenting.

By degrees I became tired of carrying on fruitless negotiations, and; indeed, I soon had no farther means of proceeding. I had advertised so long in 'Bell's Life,' that every reader of it who required a yacht must have seen that mine was for sale, and I knew that it would be useless to try the 'Times,' or any other medium. The season was now advancing, and it was necessary for me to commence the more agreeable business of purchasing, unless I was prepared to lose it, or to content myself with a craft refused by earlier birds. So I placed the *Zephyrina* on an agent's books, and according to his advice, had her moved to the West India Docks, as he considered it indispensable that she should be

within easy reach of London. I had also to engage a shipkeeper to take charge of her, as I was obliged to employ Brown in my search for another vessel.

On turning my attention in the other direction I found that my task was not so easy as I had anticipated. There were few yachts in the market of the size I required, and although I had extended my limits, their prices were still beyond me. Brown rejected narrow vessels as not suitable for 'pleasuring,' either with regard to safety or accommodation, and iron craft he considered objectionable, as never being perfectly dry inside, and requiring to have their bottoms constantly cleaned. The proposal which appeared, under the circumstances, most eligible came from an agent, who offered to take the *Zephyrina* in part payment; but the price of his yacht appeared exorbitantly high, and on my inquiring what allowance he intended to make for mine, he informed me that after I had paid him for the one he had to sell, he would put mine up to auction, and refund me whatever she realised. Of course the only effect this proposition had upon me was to suggest another means of disposing of my vessel. I proceeded forthwith to one of the principal shipping auctioneers and requested him to put her up for sale. He asked for permission to print handbills and advertise, which I readily granted, rejoicing in the prospect of recovering even a small amount. The day was fixed, and I repaired to the appointed place to witness the competition, but was somewhat surprised at being ushered on my arrival into a large gloomy hall containing a dozen small tables, at two of which four or five weather-beaten mariners were having their lunch or sipping their 'grog.' I seated myself in this desolate apartment, wondering when the bidders would arrive and the business commence, but to my dismay no person came in but the auctioneer, who marched up to the farther end of the room and began to read out a long catalogue of vessels. Most of them were wrecks, and were disposed of at

nominal sums to the lunchers. At length the *Zephyrina* was put up, and the auctioneer gave a very flourishing account of her, and presently announced a bidding of seventy pounds, and soon after another of eighty, and so on up to a hundred. At this point he stopped, and, notwithstanding all my nods and signs to let her go, observed that as there was no higher offer he should pass the lot. I felt naturally indignant at such conduct, and the moment business was over made my way up to him and demanded why he refused the hundred pounds, as, although it was a miserably small price, I would have been willing to take it. He replied that there had been no real bidders, and that the contest he had carried on so warmly was only between imaginary competitors. Here then I was no further advanced than before, and seven pounds out of pocket.

Things now, with regard to the *Zephyrina*, began to settle into a chronic state. I occasionally inserted an advertisement, but no result followed except in one or two cases a letter stating that the writer had been unable to get on board or view the yacht. These complaints implied that the shipkeeper was not performing his duty, and led to my visiting the docks to satisfy myself on the subject. I think that I may safely assert that the West India Docks is the sweetest spot about London, for the hogsheads of sugar are so numerous there that the quays are almost impassable, and the pavement is so thickly bestrewn with the rich commodity that, in wet weather, such as that in which I then paid my visit, it is very difficult to avoid slipping down into the saccharine slush. I had to wait for a 'Company' boat, in which I embarked with a dozen navvies bound for different vessels, and having at length gained the *Zephyrina*, found everything locked up and the shipkeeper absent. A man in a vessel alongside told me that he was just gone to tea with a friend from the country, but this was not very satisfactory, and I resolved to try a few days later whether that friend was still with him. On

this occasion I had to ferry myself over in an unmanageable boat, like an old barge, and, being unaccustomed to such craft, narrowly escaped falling overboard into the reeking pool. The shipkeeper was again absent, and I made my way, much incensed, to the recreant's house to upbraid him for his neglect, but before I had time to commence, he expressed his happiness at my arrival, as he had been for some time desirous of resigning his situation. Of course I at once relieved him of his charge, but was obliged to engage another man at an increased salary.

I heard nothing more of her for two months. There she lay, as many of her sex had done before, neglected and forgotten, while a more attractive rival had usurped her place. I could not even bear to hear her mentioned, for I never could think of her, nor indeed of any ship, as a mere inanimate thing, without sense or feeling. There is something in the form and in the fortunes of a daughter of the seas, and in the dangers and difficulties she has to contend with, that seems to give her a life and personality.

The next time I heard of her it was from an old sea-captain, who had been to inspect her, and brought the unwelcome intelligence that he had found the rain pouring through her decks, the cabins alive with rats, and everything about her fast falling to decay. What was I to do? Was I to spend a considerable sum in keeping a vessel in repair which was of no use to me, and for which I could not obtain a sixpence? 'No!' I replied—I felt like a murderer—'I will destroy her, break her up; her materials will bring something.'

'Break her up, sir? You'll find that a very expensive undertaking, with wages at six shillings a day—very serious thing, sir.'

'Confound it all, then!' I exclaimed, impatiently; 'I'll—I'll sink her.'

'Sink her, sir? You would be liable to prosecution by the Thames Conservancy.'

'Well, then,' I persisted, recklessly, 'I'll burn her.'

'Burn her, sir?' he replied, in horror, 'you would not be allowed to do that; you might set some other ship on fire.'

'What, then,' I demanded, fiercely, 'is it that I and my descendants are bound always to pay a man to live in this vessel, and are to keep her in repair for ever? Have I saddled myself with a perpetual annuity? A man should think well before he buys a yacht!'

'Well, sir,' he returned, after some reflection, 'I think that I have a friend who would give something

for her; and although it may not be much, perhaps it will be your best way to take it, and rid yourself of further liabilities.'

And so I did. I disposed of her to this 'friend' for next to nothing, and I understand he has been exorcising me ever since for selling him such a bad bargain. She proved to be twenty-two years old, and to have been lengthened by the bow. Her timbers were rotten, her mast sprung, and the peculiar cut of her mainsail was owing to its having belonged to another vessel.

THE PLAYGROUNDS OF EUROPE.

The South.

NUMBERS of our fellow-countrymen, multitudes of our fellow-Europeans, a few perhaps of our fellow-Americans, are migrating towards 'the sweet South,' if they have not already arrived there. I too have been in the South in my youth, and I have been there in, say, my maturity.

But how immense the difference in the means of getting there, and how slight the change in what you see when you get there! I am not speaking of mere political scene-shiftings—of Nice and Mentone annexed to France—of liberated Venetia and United Italy—questions for tax-gatherers, diplomatic agents, and foreign secretaries—but of the general aspect of a country, the natural history of its inhabitants and their ways. Some grand social regeneration may be coming over Italy; but it is not come yet. The same sights strike your eye, the same smells meet your nose.

How delightful to find the first drops from a bottle—or still more surely from a flask—of wine cleverly dashed out upon the floor, exactly as they were thirty and probably three thousand years ago—a libation to the household gods, and a protest against northern housemaids' neatness! A genuine Italian *cameriere* has a soul above sawdust, sand, or soap. What is a floor made for but to receive and keep what falls upon

it, without the intervention of any foreign substance? How refreshing to be again met at every turn with entreaties for charity, for the love of God! Italy has not yet forgotten either the way to hold out her hand or to ask for more. It would be a curious statistical problem to ascertain how many of Victor Emmanuel's subjects are beggars. Cynics aver that nine out of every ten are such.

Beggary is a southern institution, which is only restrained within frontier bounds. The new line which separates France from Italy is a purely artificial limit. It is marked by a couple of posts on each side of the road, one of which bears the warning notice, 'Mendicity is forbidden in the Département of the Maritime Alps.' A recent traveller saw two Italian beggars, one standing at the foot of each post, just within the territory where they had the right to beg, ready to attack the wayfarer immediately he set foot in their country. The spirit with which they asserted their ancient privilege received, as it deserved, substantial alms.

The same traveller, in a public garden at Milan, accidentally let fall a few pieces of money. A well-dressed passenger in a white cravat picked them up, restored them to their owner, and then held out his hand for a charitable contribution.

It was considered a good lesson of self-respect to take his hand and shake it instead of tipping it. He smiled at the friendly act but did not blush. Evidently he would have preferred a less ceremonious form of acknowledgment. It will require a hard push and a considerable lapse of time to bring the South up to the mark of the North, it being simply fifty years behindhand. Take Genoa, for instance, a busy place which it is the custom to admire; and it is difficult to look at it without admiration, as a monument of olden time. But instead of calling it Genoa the Superb, we might style it Genoa the Obsolete. Its palaces belong to bygone days as completely as the Pyramids of Egypt. They try hard to conform to modern wants and usages, and cannot. A city of eight-storied palaces without lifts is not in unison with the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Genoa is a collection of edificial antiquities, in which gas, in enormous mediæval lanterns, is an inconsistency and an incongruity; while railways are absolute nuisances, rendering narrow streets still narrower, and stopping the circulation of man and beast by their noisy rushings to and fro. As the ammonite itself has vanished, although casts of its fossil shell remain, so the princely builders of Genoa are either extinct or are shadows merely of their ancestors.

Out of such palaces you make hotels; and what is the consequence? To get a bedroom you have to mount perhaps a hundred steps (the *Hôtel Feder* has some at an altitude of one hundred and forty steps); or, if your bedroom is at a lower level, you are compelled to climb to the dining-room, and lifts, I repeat, are things unknown. At the *Hôtel de la Ville* the dining-room is—my memory will not be answerable for half-a-dozen or so, but I do not think that it exaggerates—some ninety-nine steps above the street. The room itself—too magnificent, too vast—has a loftier ceiling than many a church. After dusk, although you eat your food by the aid of lamps on the table and a gas-light overhead, the hall itself is

darkness visible. And, not from the cornice, but from something more than half-way below it, is suspended a bell-pull—a bell-pull in middle-age Genoa! Why not a knocker at the entrance to the Colosseum at Rome? The only way to modernise such cities as Genoa, as far as its material condition is concerned, is to do as has been done at Edinburgh and elsewhere—build a new town beside the old one. The moral progress of the people must depend on the result of the struggle now going on between the powers of light and darkness throughout the whole length and breadth of the land.

At Turin, till lately the capital of the foremost sovereign of Italy, illuminated by the highest intelligences, we find installed *La Sonnambula* Ida, who gives (no doubt for as much as they are worth, although she may not earn quite so much as *Miss Patti Sonnambula*) *Consultations in Magnetismo*, announcing the fact all over the town by notices bearing a postage-stamp, like all other bills, placards, and announcements, whether manuscript or not, even the playbill posted to the walls, down to 'Apartments to let, inquire within,' for Italy wants revenue, and would erect a statue to any Chancellor of the Exchequer who could invent a new tax and gather it, without people's feeling it, or grumbling if they felt it. Italy, however, may be pardoned a little credulity and superstition if, as is asserted on good authority, the daily receipt of the French railways falls off considerably on Fridays!

Turin is probably the most regularly built of Italian towns. Everything there except the Po (which will flow on its own perverse circumambibus way, and is only made navigable for boats by barrages across the stream at short distances) is rectilinear and rectangular. This extreme regularity gives a marked physiognomy to the town, but it deprives the streets of their individual physiognomy; while in streets with arcades on each side of them the houses have no physiognomy at all. Nothing is easier than to mistake, or to fail to recognise any given house.

The houses of Turin are lofty, most of them being five stories high, besides entresols and other interstices, which is imposing but inconvenient. In the hotels, for a moderate-priced room, you will have to mount at least to the third story (*piano*). Mine was reached by only eighty-nine steps. All over the town is an overflow of photography; and to arrive at a photographer's laboratory you must climb to the fourth or fifth. In houses inhabited by different families you may find a hen taking her walks and enjoying the air from the elevation of the third outside gallery, and dahlias in boxes flowering on the roof. All the shops are dark and dingy, many looking as if the inmates slept under the counter or on the shelves. The smartest and best-furnished are under the arcades which encircle the Piazza di Castello.

Where do the poor contrive to find a habitation in these palatial blocks of buildings? Some are forced up to the chimney-tops by the pressure of their wealthier fellow-townsmen; others are sent out to the faubourgs to lodge. Still, these vast edifices contain nooks and crannies in which small folk, like the rats and the mice, manage to hide their heads and even to make merry. Asking for a glass of wine at a humble shop where working men were frolicking and feasting, I was shown upstairs to a suite of little chambers, such as might be stolen from between floors and ceilings, beneath balks and joists, under gable-ends and corners. Human insects had wormed their hidden way into the interstices of aristocratic mansions.

In Genoa it is different, so far as that, there, the labouring world has an openly-assigned habitat. The steep, narrow, dark, straight, and house-bound *vico*, or lane, swarms with life, which may neither be very unhappy nor unhealthy in a climate where, for months together, shade and gloom are luxuries.

Turin streets are primitively paved with water-worn pebbles from the river's bed; but the central road has a double row of flagstone rails for the wheels of carriages going up

and down in contrary directions, enabling at least the omnibuses to drag enormous loads. As to gardens, you are not yet come to the glorious evergreens of Florence or the orange-trees and palms of the Mediterranean coast, while you have left behind you the trim and luxuriant parterres of Paris. There is a piece of ground covered with patches of ordinary shrubs (snowberries and other like nannies) badly planted, in wretched health. You are prayed not to walk upon the grass, but you ask where the grass is to walk upon, as you cannot mistake for it plantains and weeds. You are requested not to touch anything, but you may inquire where there is anything that anybody would think of touching.

Pedestrian travel is much less understood south of the Alps than amidst them and north of them. The natives seem to consider that the man who goes on foot, however decent in his appearance and prompt and just in his expenditure, can, at bottom, be no other than a member of the grame! 'Tramp' family, or at best an offshoot of the 'Pedlar' branch. To travel on foot, in the South, without annoyance, your papers had best be forthcoming and *en règle*, and even that is not always sufficient to avert suspicion and sidelong glances, particularly in the neighbourhood of a frontier line. 'Who would go on foot,' they think, if they do not say, 'who *could* go in any other way?' Therefore, it is believed there must be some motive, some reason for concealment, some desire to sneak away stealthily under the cover of by-paths and unfrequented hours of the day, some avoidance of the numerous honest native folk who wouldn't walk a mile unless to save their lives. On foot! Amidst worshippers of the *dolce far niente*, indulgers in noon-day napping, starvers six days in the week for the sake of a drive on the seventh! No, indeed! Footing it may do very well for people in training for *travaux forcés*, or for gentlemen indifferent to penal servitude; but it is only a cause of wonder in latitudes where, at certain seasons and hours of the day, none

but dogs and Englishmen are to be seen abroad.

Railway projects, now in execution, will, when completed, permit the accomplishment of sundry pleasant and inviting trips, in about as many days as, thirty years ago, it was customary to employ weeks in completing them. Portions of the Mediterranean coast can now be got at and skirted by rail; Italy can be approached to within an inconsiderable distance by rail; and *in* Italy itself there are railways which are and will be on the increase. True, you do not see so much by rail as you did while posting, or even by diligence; per contra, you are so much less time about it, and you *do* see places which, in old times, busy people had little chance of visiting at all.

Still, there is enough variety on the marvellous rail to make it worth while to keep your eyes open—unless, as on some lines southward, everything is shut out by envious acacia hedges.

Thus, you change railways for *chemins-de-fer*, after crossing a herring-pond called the English Channel; and you quit *them*, by traversing a respectable range of rock, for *strade ferrate* and *ferrovie*. And the change involves something more than a mere alteration of name.

You test the qualities of multifarious beds, by measuring your length in them night after night. There are springy beds and non-elastic beds; beds of wool and horse-hair; beds of seaweed (*zostera*) and straw; beds of indian-corn husks; high beds requiring a ladder to reach them, low beds on which you cannot sit without getting cramp in your back; shake-down beds and beds in alcoves; narrow beds not wide enough for one, and broad beds in which three might pass the night; feather-beds under you, and eider-down beds over you;—every bed, except the be-curtained, be-canopied four-post bed you left at home.

Then there are your travelling companions, in railway-carriage and at table-d'hôte. There is the French lady, with handsome grey hair and

a turquoise ring, who travels with two tall daughters and a tiny lap-dog. There are people who travel with birds; with baskets as big as Noah's arks; with plants in pots, of slight money value, but doubtless rich in recollections. There is the stout burly man, with dirty hands and a ruby ring set round with diamonds, who abuses French railways, holding up for the Prussian; who bullies the officials if anything goes wrong on their parts, telling them truly that the railway has no mercy if a *passenger* commits the slightest error.

There is the diner who sulks at his dinner, complains to the waiter, and won't eat it, although he pays for it all the same. There is the little French lady, eleven years of age (more at home at the table-d'hôte than she would be in her nursery), who does quite the contrary, helping herself to wine into which her papa prudently dashes water, and 'going into' every dish as it comes round to her with a resolution worthy of a nobler cause.

Then there are the unaccustomed eatables, the foreign viands, the novel meeses, to be tasted and tried. Bread made with leaven instead of yeast; barbel, highly prized, and pike elevated to the rank of a dainty dish; leg of mutton, not sauced with currant jelly, but seasoned with a clove of garlic; escargots, or snails in the shell; *grives au ginièvre* (Mont Cenis), thrushes whose natural flavour is improved by feeding on the berries of the juniper bush. Foolish thrushes, not to abstain from everything appertaining to gin! Foolish gourmands, not to abstain from thrushes which devour the devourers of your vines and their produce! 'Monsieur does not like little birds!' when a dozen cock-robins on a spit are brought me, is uttered by the garçon with the same wonderment as a London dining-rooms waiter would exclaim, 'The gent does not like a cut of the haunch!—the gent does not like a mealy potato!' No, I don't like them (the dickey-birds). Take them away.

There is the landlord who estimates you by your luggage. Trunks,

with him, are the test of merit; your virtues lie in your baggage and boxes. With six large port-manteaus, you will get a first-floor lodging; with five of moderate size, you may have to mount no higher than the second; with four or three, you may possibly gain admittance to the third or fourth; while with one little one, in the height of the season, you may possibly have to sleep in the street.

There is the 'cuter landlord who apprises your worth by the portable property which adorns your person. With the keen glance of a pawn-broker he reckons up, 'Watch-chain, so much; stock-pin, so much; rings, so much; studs, so much; decoration (if any), so much; total, so much. I think I may take him in.' And there is the hotel-keeper who, having received you as a squeezable consignment, coolly insists on passing you on to another of the fraternity with whom an understanding exists. It is an exchange of prisoners, on terms settled beforehand. They may keep between them, for aught I know, a debtor and creditor account of guests delivered and received. Your itinerary is made out for you; you are sent away in charge of your driver, very much like a lamb driven off to be shorn, after undergoing a searching interrogatory—

'Monsieur is going next to——?'

'Bellolido; where I intend sleeping at the Albergo del Sole.'

'Monsieur cannot do that. He will rather push on to Cattivomonte, and descend at the Hôtel des Ecorcheurs.'

'I must stop at Bellolido. I expect letters at the Poste Restante there.'

'At least Monsieur cannot go to the Albergo del Sole. Low people, bad kitchen, dirty beds. Nobody of Monsieur's rank ever goes there; nothing but pig-jobbers, pedlars, and calf-merchants. Luckily there is also at Bellolido an excellent Hôtel des Ecorcheurs. Monsieur has only to present this card—"Particularly recommended by Louis Leloup to the distinguished attention of Ludwig Derwolf." Guiseppe, you will take good care to conduct

Monsieur straight to the Hôtel des Ecorcheurs. Bon voyage, Monsieur. Servitore umilissimo.'

Guiseppe knows it is all his place is worth to allow Monsieur to give him the slip. Besides, Guiseppe gets his own little pickings, in the shape of a supper and the regulation tip.

There is the waiter who persists in calling you 'Milor,' though you tell him you are no more a Milor than he is. How can you travel at your ease, he thinks, and live at hotels, and do nothing but sight-see all day and all night too, unless indeed you are a Milor? There is the polyglot courier, who does not speak, but who beautifully breaks on the wheel of his tongue four or five different languages, his own included; for the Piedmontese dialect is to pure Italian, what French of Stratford-le-Bow is to French of Paris, only separated, if anything, by a wider interval.

There are Savoyard cheesemakers—a railway carriage is often an Exchange, a Cornhill, a Bourse, a place of business—bargaining with a cheese-buyer, as hard as if their very lives were in question. You expect they are going to pitch each other out of the window. They do no such thing. Talk of comic actors! There are few to equal these. At the next station, they get out, all indignant. Their conscience is shocked; their moral sense upset. They will have nothing to do with such a price!—nothing whatever! They depart; they return. They haggle, refuse, frown, turn their backs, and again go away. The train is in motion; they come and hang on to it. Just before danger-speed is attained, they conclude the bargain, with smiles, nods, and friendly hand-shakings.

There is the transition between plain and mountain, the unaccustomed produce of the land, the pear-shaped haystacks, the golden bunches of Indian corn, the festooned vines. There is the change of costume, the contrast of races—the high-coloured French complexion, the sallow Savoyard, the cheese-faced Swiss, the cleanly, fresh-looking English countenance.

There are the vehicles—without mentioning railway carriages, of which there is a sufficient variety, both in their arrangements and their administration—from the one-horse pill-box, with a little bull's-eye in the back, to the monster three-bodied diligence, drawn by seven horses, four abreast in front (for the purpose of running over naughty little boys and girls, and happily despatching halt and lame old men and women), to be increased to twelve when the mountain steepens. Lord Bateman, to console his rejected bride, said—

'She came here on a horse and pillow;
She shall go home in a coach and three.'

Mont Cenis would tell her—

'She came up at a walk with a down (sage);
She shall go down at a gallop with two.'

and think herself lucky, if she reach the bottom without breaking her neck. I prefer walking down Mont Cenis, unless with my eyes bandaged, or in a pitch-dark night. It (the diligence) is a moving mass, some twelve yards long without the additional horses; lofty out of all proportion to its length, covered with a black leather coat that might have been the shell of an ante-diluvian armadillo, and resembling Polyphemus in having for its eye one big lantern, which would not disgrace itself if it had to do duty as a lighthouse. This world upon wheels, with its population and their property, pushes before it downhill a single pair of horses, which just serve to help it to turn the corners. Should the driver have a sun-stroke, or a drop too much; should it upset, there are posts by the roadside which, by catching a wheel, may prevent it from going over the precipice. Well, say what you like, I *do* prefer walking down Mont Cenis. We shall whizz through it by rail, one of these days. The tunnel is half done already; which is even better than 'well begun.'

Nor must we forget the enormous difference between the journey out and the return homewards. Hills which appear charming when you enter or approach the Alps, have but few attractions when you are leaving them. There comes on a satiety of

the picturesque and the novel, as surely as there does of material feasting. Even an accident, a running off the rails, and a good scratching in an acacia hedge, if no worse, is regarded less as a romantic stimulant than an untoward delay in your reaching home.

But we are still on our way towards the South, and may glance, yet untired, at what we see, and indulge in a brief inquisitive halt or two. As you may judge of a workman by his chips, so you may guess at a country by its fuel. At Macon (excellent buffet for supping or dining), faggots of vine-twigs are hawked about the streets, to light the fires and make the pot boil. Fancy larded quails, barded with vine-leaves, and roasted over a vine-wood fire! The morning milk-delivery is a remnant of the practice of falconry. Earthen milkpots, covered with round pieces of wood, are carried suspended with sticks, like hooded hawks—and there terminates all analogy between the bland fluid and the bloodthirsty bird. After Amberieux station, the villages become Italian in their character. Convex-tiled, ruddy-brown, slightly-sloping roofs, with broad-edged eaves, nestled amidst clumps of chestnut and walnut trees, attest the relationship of Savoy with the peninsula. The incomplete shelter and imperfect closing afforded by the houses and their doors and windows, are a proof of the warmth of the climate during the greater part of the year.

For those who have never seen a lake, and even for those who have, there is the exquisitely blue Lac de Bourget, with its skirting road and occasional tunnels; the emergence from each of which presents you with a different picture of rock and water, and the vines hang garlands from tree to tree.

Chambery is a toad in a hole. At its inner edge, the hole may be green and pleasant, festooned with grapes and bristling with maize; but the outer wall of mountains is so lofty and rugged as to place the town in a very constrained position—cribbed, cabined, and confined in a rocky prison. It is a place

that had stood still for scores of years past—until the railway made one change, and annexion to France another—with two or three old, grey, respectable streets, and sundry winding, narrow lanes, more Italian than French in the cut of their jib. The dwellings of the lower class are dark and dingy, with earthen floors or paved with pebbles.

French is the language, Roman Catholicism the religion. The Savoyards appear to have little affinity with the Swiss, by whom indeed they are despised. Very likely, absorption by their great neighbour may turn out to suit them in the end. One of the most surprising facts of railing, is that fresh oysters should be offered at Chambéry. During the reigns of the Dukes of Savoy, Chambéry could know none but fossil oysters.

The great point, now, for the traveller whose leave of absence (and perhaps whose travelling purse) is limited is, that the gaps still existing in the iron road should be filled up as soon as possible.

The two grand obstacles which rear themselves in the course of our steeple-chasing after southern sunshine, have been stuck in our way by the hand of Nature; and we cannot take them at a leap, as the high-mettled rider clears his brook, his hedge and ditch, or his dry stone wall. For a time we roll onwards, smoothly enough, and at as reasonable expense as man can hope for, with little or no interruption or privation of needful repose and ordinary meals; seeing that a person who cannot breakfast and lunch in a railway carriage (or even sup) will hardly get elected by the Rational Tourists' Club, much less by the Alpine.

There is no need to exchange a good night's rest in bed for feverish slumbers on the line; nor do I recommend the sacrifice. Man makes locomotives to expedite his person with greater speed; but he is not himself a locomotive. He requires something more than to be oiled, and cleaned, and liberally fed with coals and water. *He* cannot, like his watch, be wound up in half a minute.

His re-windings up, reparations, and refittings require a given lapse of time for their due performance. To get interest for your money, you must let it lie quiet for a while; and if you draw on the capital of strength which is lying to your credit in your corporeal bank (by devoting night to spending instead of accumulating it), your balance will be so much diminished, and will have to be made up for by-and-by. Therefore, never travel all night,—if you can help it, or unless you like it best.

By leaving Boulogne-sur-Mer at 9 A.M. and sleeping in Paris; leaving Paris at 6.40, sleeping at Macon; and leaving Macon at 5.10, you reach St. Michel, the railway's end, in the afternoon, in three easy days, passing every night between the sheets, at an expense of 79 fr. 55 c., second class, and 37 fr. 15 c., third class, should the tourist be of frugal mind—as many tourists of late have the hardihood to be. The third-class traveller *must* halt at the above-named sleeping-places; because, were he to push on to Montereau (as he might, by leaving Boulogne at 6 A.M.), the direct train (25) by which he leaves Paris will not give him third-class tickets onwards until 9.50, to reach Macon so uncomfortably late as 9.33. The second-class passenger may lay out his stages as he pleases, sleeping at Montereau, if he will, to leave it at 8.35 A.M. It is needless to insist on the difference between being gifted with eyesight by day, and being blind by night, while skimming over foreign lands of such importance and interest as France and Savoy.

At St. Michel, a giant steps into your way, demanding a toll—black-mail of both your time and your money; which latter two Mr. Grove ought to include in his next discourse on Correlative Forces. The giant is of lofty stature, very square built, hard-hearted, of unknown age. His head is covered with patches of hoariness. He is considerably given to brawling; and when he threatens, it is unwise to despise his threats, for they are warnings of coming commotion and trouble. To

move him is next to impossible; where he takes his stand, there he remains. But notwithstanding the firmness of his character, he is incurably given to constant weeping, of which interested people take advantage, turning his own weakness against himself and using it to force (by water-worked machinery), directly through and across his domains, the very passage which he refuses to grant. Nevertheless, he is a handsome giant, with whom any lady might fall in love without blushing. If approached at proper times and seasons, no one can complain of the reception he gives them. He is not devoid of hospitality, and his name is MONT CENIS.

Before the final ascent of Mont Cenis, on this side, is a village Lanslebourg, which thinks no small beer of itself. In cookery, it rivals Stodare's performances. It makes every possible dish out of mutton. Beef-soup, mutton-broth, calf's-head à la tortue, sheep's trotters in disguise. Fillet of beef—loin of mutton, boned. Fine-flavoured venison—excellent ram; genuine chamois—tender ewe. Roast shoulder of veal (so small that it must have been roasted before the calf was born), eaten with relish, because we recognize it as blade-bone of mutton, only wanting the kidney beans or the onion sauce to complete the identification. Calf's foot jelly—sheep's foot idem; kid gloves—lamb-skin idem.

At last the blissful moment arrives when you enter the olive groves, the forests of dreamland. You have reached the South. You find yourself in actuality under a sky, in an atmosphere, and amidst a vegetation which you had seen faintly in pictures, had figured feebly from poetry, or caught transient glimpses of 'twixt sleep and awake. They are colourless trees, with shadowy foliage; looking, in certain lights, like glittering masses of micaceous powder suspended by magic in the air, in others like clustered flakes of greyish snow hovering by attraction about the out-

stretched branches. Greyish, not grey, is the fitting epithet; for indefinite as grey is as a colour, the tint of olive leaves, hanging on the tree, is still less definable. It is neither green, white, nor brown, but a neutral something, approaching nearest to glaucous, which harmonises with everything contrasted to it.

Then, you think of the eastern enigma, 'What is the tree, all whose leaves are light on one side and dark on the other?' and decide that the answer might as well and justly be An Olive Tree, as The Year.

So old are many olive trees, that their age is quite unguessable; only you are sure that the heads of the great-great-grandfathers of those who planted them must have long since ceased to ache. Their aspect, as compared with other cultivated trees, is that of Stonehenge compared with other ruins. They are still adolescent when other trees are old. At the age of maturity for ordinary fruit trees, they are still immature and unproductive. There are, at Terni, olive trees under which tradition says that Pliny walked. After gazing at them attentively, you can easily bring yourself to believe that they are not real trees, but elves, hamadryads, unyielding nymphs, imprisoned out of revenge in a dungeon of bark under the form of a vegetable. They are captive spirits confined in a living coffin which has grown into and become part of themselves. In the weird hours of night, they must surely shake off their encircling panoply, and frolic and gambol over ravine and rock, until the cock's shrill clarion warns them to retire to the concealment of their sylvan disguise.

Of La Corniche, whence you may behold distant Corsica; of Mentone, where you may muse over the Mediterranean waves; of Monaco, where you may gamble away your last napoleon; of Nice, where you may dance gaily into your coffin, I have not a word to say at present.

THE TAMAR AND THE TAVY.

HAVE you ever been at Plymouth, my dear Achates? I think I know your answer—you have intimated as much to me before—'Only passed through.' A vague answer, conveying the notion of only an infinitesimal knowledge of Plymouth. Perhaps while you were waiting for the train, like Mr. Tennyson at Coventry, you lounged about with grooms and porters. Perhaps you did as I did when I first 'passed through' Plymouth, timed yourself and ran up to see the Hoe. How you must have been astonished when the magnificent Sound first stretched before you! Had you ever before seen such an extent of natural loveliness in conjunction with the highest product of our civilization, the escarped rocks, the prodigious breakwater, the stately war vessels with their dormant thunders? You ought to allow yourself at least three days. And if it is the fallow time of the year, and you are at leisure to follow the guidance of your own sweet will, your three days may advantageously be expanded into at least three weeks. For let me tell you candidly, Achates, that Plymouth is an extraordinary place. It is not extraordinary even as other places are accounted extraordinary. In going through the wilderness of this world I have seen a great deal of our great semi-metropolitan cities, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield, Glasgow, Belfast, Bristol. And an Englishman hardly knows his country unless he knows these, for they most materially help to make up England. But they have failed to impress me, although I tried to keep my eyes and my mind fairly open, in the same way that Plymouth has impressed me. Because at Plymouth you have, more than elsewhere, a perfect combination of supreme natural beauty with the highest achievements of modern art. I grant you that this requires a great deal of faith in the first instance. As you move along the streets, where you will observe quantities of Devonshire girls with very

pretty complexions, allowing for a certain stir and picturesqueness you will still think that your expectations have received only a very limited gratification. I am prepared for that. But let the place grow upon you and it will. I met a Goth once who said he thought nothing of the Sound when he first saw it. But that same amiable Goth admitted that before his promenades on the Hoe had ceased he had learned to discern a thousand beauties in the Sound. You will remember that Sir Francis Drake and his sea-captains were playing at bowls on the Hoe when the news of the Armada was brought to them. But set about your investigations in an orderly way with map and 'Murray.' There is a fine history of the British navy which you may work out in the three towns, Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport, the whole of them being called Plymouth for short. If you understand docks and dockyards, gunnery and machinery, factories and fortifications, victualling, cooperage, and storage, smithing and engineering—I am paying an undeserved compliment to your understanding in supposing for a moment that you do—you will derive a great deal of instructive enjoyment. But if your enjoyment is of a mitigated description, and mainly made up of wonderment, your eye will hardly be sufficiently sated with the beauty of the neighbouring shores and the inland scenery.

Then again Plymouth is a very social place. The people there are not particularly rich people. Millionaires and territorial lords do not abound in Plymouth society. The chief nobility are, in fact, non-resident. But there is a wonderful gathering of army men and navy men, to my mind the most interesting people in the world, and abundance of acute professional men, and merchants enow; and if it were my object to improve your mind, I would explain to you the very considerable things which the sons of Plymouth have achieved in art and

science—but I am afraid, Achates, that in early life you bore only a very shadowy resemblance to Lord Macaulay's 'intelligent schoolboy.' The Plymouth people generally entertain very cheerful views about things. The corporation sold their noble parish church—that is to say, the advowson—in order to raise funds to build a theatre. There were several social points about Plymouth—not so much connected with the swells as with the mobility, which struck me, the enlightened tourist, as being very interesting. There is an enterprising man there who hires several steam-vessels for pleasure excursions in the summer on the Plymouth waters. Several of these are expressly arranged for the convenience of persons who will be confined by business during the day. There are Early Dawn Excursions and Moonlight Excursions, right round the Breakwater and to Cawsand Bay, or out into the open sea, round the Edystone Lighthouse and back again. On a fine afternoon or evening the boats will be thronged, and on many tired, worn faces there will be a most happy expression of pleasure and repose. A very favourite excursion is up the Tamar to the Weir-head, but that is a long expedition, and requires nearly the whole of the day. Then any one who is at Plymouth on a fine Monday ought to take the ferry and go over to Mount Edgecumbe. Every Monday the Earl—

'Gives his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people.'

Most pleasant it is to see the people enjoying themselves amid lawns and terraced walks, and leafy avenues, and in wooded dells, and on lofty cliffs, and along sequestered paths by the side of the ocean. But be there early in the morning or in the gloaming, when the presence of crowds will not dash away a portion of the enchantment of the scene. But the loveliness can never be really dimmed. You can very well understand how Medina Sidonia, when the Armada drew near to Plymouth, signalled out Mount Edgecumbe as his share of the future spoils. Then you will go down to the Cremill Beach, where Sir Joshua Rey-

nolds painted his first portrait on an old sail, and before you is the broad estuary of the Hamoaze, with many a man-of-war resting peacefully in its shadows, where many confluent streams pour their waters, and among them the Tamar and the Tavy.

I will, as you request, give you my notes on these rivers, not only because I visited them from Plymouth, but because I have repeatedly met them in my tours, and they have so interested me that I have read up any information which I could procure respecting them. My boat passes beneath the wonderful tube of the Albert Bridge, Brunel's greatest achievement. From the river that tube looks as slight as Blondin's tight-rope to the flooring of faces below. It is simply a railway tight-rope, and a nervous passenger would be startled if he could realize his position as I am able to realize it for him. Then you pass Saltaash, the crazy old houses piled one upon another, balconied and balustraded. At this point the river is a vast sheet of water, a lake shadowed by pendant woods. Here, on the left side, is the confluence of the Tamar and the Tavy, amid the famous woods of Warleigh and with Dartmoor as a distant background. The Tavy is a regular Dartmoor stream, and gives its name to Tavistock, a frontier town of the Moor. In Browne's 'Pastorals' there is a pretty story of 'The Loves of the Walla and the Tavy,' perhaps the prettiest of all. Browne was contemporary with Shakspeare and Spenser. The Tamar is not a Dartmoor river. As far as its course goes, some sixty miles to the sea, it serves as the border between Devon and Cornwall, and where it fails, not far from the Bristol Channel, its place as a boundary is taken by a much more diminutive stream.

Warleigh, at the confluence of the stream, has its own place both in history and legend. There is a high, bold rock, called Warleigh Tor, which nobly sentinel the entrance to the Tavy. In the great hall of the mansion, lighted with windows of stained glass, are old

portraits which ought to be compared with the old monuments in Tamerton church. Tamerton church is close by the little creek of the same name, where it is pleasant to row about on a summer evening; and not long ago there was to be seen here—but it is now blown down—the fatal oak of Coplestone. Here Coplestone of Warleigh, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, in a fit of passion threw a dagger at his godson, which slew him beneath the oak, and he had to purchase the avaricious queen's pardon with thirteen of his manors in Cornwall. There is a hamlet of Coplestone, in the parish of Crediton, which hamlet has a station on the North Devon line, boasting of a strange cross, to which no one has ever yet been able to assign date or meaning, but which the distinguished Bishop Coplestone caused to be exactly reproduced on his own lands. If I were a novelist, I should suppose that this curious cross had some connection with the 'angered' but repentant godfather who acted, to say the least of it, with such extreme imprudence. But I must not now linger in Tamerton Creek, as I intend to make a push for the Weir-head. The Plymouth boats often promise to take you to the Weir-head, but they frequently fall short of performance. Let me make honourable mention of the occasion when I achieved my object. It was a boat chartered by a most amiable set of people belonging to a church which was called 'Ritualistic.' I remember knowing a similar set of people who used to dine together at the Crystal Palace. I speak as a perfectly unprejudiced individual; and I consider that these innovations on the traditional tea-parties of another ecclesiastical type are of a very praiseworthy description. The profits were to be devoted to the schools or something of that sort; and I believe the treasurer exhibited a decisive balance of five-pence, which caused great triumph, a deficit being the more ordinary result. Under their auspices I did the twenty-two miles of river to the Weir-head, which I had previously failed to do under any other auspices. The river scenery is really very re-

markable, and the expedition ought to be done more than once. In order properly to appreciate river scenery, here and elsewhere, you should traverse high grounds near the river, where you can obtain views commanding the windings of the stream. There is one such view on the right bank of the Tamar, which is considered by competent authority as commanding the most impressive and beautiful view in Cornwall. So we pass up the river admiring the opening and closing shores, here the beautiful curve, there the dense masses of foliage shadowing the water-side, now the glimpses of pastoral scenery, presently the views of manor-house and mansion. You will not fail to notice a modern castle called Pentillie, beneath a tower-crowned hill called Mount Ararat. The worthy who possessed this estate at the beginning of the last century 'expressed a desire that after death he should be placed in this tower, seated in a chair in his customary dress, and before a table furnished with the appliances of drinking and smoking.' Then the Tamar below the woods of Cothele are very pretty. The river skirts the embowered hollow of Danescombe, and close by a dense rock shadows the water, crowned by a small chapel, which has its legend. When the boat does not go further than Calstock, the passengers break up into parties for rambles in the woods—oak, elm, and chestnut. The embattled mansion of Cothele, the third seat of the Mount-Edgecumbe family, which you may visit in a day, must be passed over in despair of hoping to do it justice. The Queen and the Prince Consort came up the Tamar in their steam-yacht, and visited Cothele and slept there a night. They also went to the Weir-head, and from thence made a call at Endsleigh—and I propose to do the same. By-and-by you come to the Morwell rocks. The river is girt on either hand by lofty rocks, but the Morwell rock is so superb that people might well come from remote parts of the country in order to revel in such scenery. A seemingly perilous path skirts it, called the Duke of Bedford's road, having

been laid out by the reigning duke of the period. You pass into some private ground hard by the Weir-head, into which you are admitted upon the payment of the very moderate fee of one penny. The weir of course put an end to all further navigation. The multitude of weirs is becoming more and more a serious matter, and no weir ought to be permitted when a salmon-ladder, properly approved, is not provided. I fell into conversation with a gentleman who told me that he used to rent this portion of the river, many years before, as a fishery. That part of the pleasure of fishing which consists in the enjoyment of scenery cannot be found in greater perfection than upon the pleasant turf, by the sparkling river, beneath the shadow of the Morwell rock. But fishing in the Tamar is not now what it used to be. The mines have spoilt all that. There is a famous mine which goes under the bed of the river. Many streams in Devon and Cornwall, which used to yield excellent trout and salmon fishing, have been poisoned by tin and copper. The streams which flow from the Dartmoor watershed are comparatively untainted; but near Dartmoor the trout are small, and the salmon too far from the mouths of rivers to be in good condition. Our old friend rehearsed the delights of an Indian Paradise by renewing his old sports and rehauling the captured booty. He congratulates himself on having had the best of things when things were not so bad. Properly speaking, you ought now to return back with your excursion party to Plymouth. You have probably met with some nice people, and you may improve your acquaintance with them at lunch in the inn or during a stroll in the woods. But if you really want to explore the Tamar and the Tavy, you must make your adieux at Morwellham, and make across country to some other point. It is a difficult thing, Achates, to make your election between that cheerful party and a solitary ramble. I know some fellows who would abandon any programme from such considera-

tions; but what is the use of a programme unless you mean to carry it out? Our business for the present must lie with those twin sister-streams of the Tamar and Tavy.

I will tell you something, suggested by an incident the other day, which you can work into a story if you like. At Salisbury a young gentleman is lounging on the platform of the railway station, waiting for the arrival of the London train. Now this young gentleman has only got a dozen miles to go to some neighbouring station, and for that purpose he is duly provided with a second-class ticket. But it so happens that, as the train draws up by the platform, he catches an enticing view of a very nice-looking girl, with lively eyes, seated in a compartment of a first-class carriage. He commits error number one by entering the carriage, and taking his seat opposite the young lady. They are alone, but she does not brandish a dagger or display a pistol, with the statement that she is prepared to protect herself from insult, which, I believe, has happened to be the case with elderly or excited females. On the contrary, the liveliness of her conversation corresponds with the liveliness of her eyes. By-and-by the train halts at the petty station, but the gentleman traveller, charmed with this pleasant companionship, madly goes on. Error number two. It was very nice while they were discussing balls and rides, novels and news, Paris and the Highlands; but when they are not very far from London, tickets are in due course demanded. Now this is very awkward for the young gentleman, first, because he has no money in his pocket to pay for the extra distance he has travelled; and secondly, because he is travelling in a first-class carriage with only a second-class ticket in his pocket. That young man deserves a moral lesson on the propriety of adhering to an original intention. What shall be our *dénouement*, Achates? Shall we leave that youth on the platform, exposed to the just scorn of the young lady, and in the custody of the station-master? or shall we be liberal, my

friend—the notion will cost us nothing—and make that young lady produce her purse, and the gentleman procure her name and address for the purpose of repaying the loan, and so lay the foundation for a marriage and a life of happiness?

We only return so far as Morwelham Quay, and then we go by the side of the canal to Tavistock. This walk is remarkable as giving some of the prettiest canal scenery in existence, and also for the considerable distance which the canal traverses underground. The scenery by the towing-path is fully equal to much fine river scenery. Here and there you will see the engine-house of a mine peeping through foliage, and will own that even this very utilitarian object can be made to look picturesque. Here, too, you will catch a gleam of the Tavy, rushing through a defile of wooded hills, which we last saw by Tamerton Creek, in its juncture with the Tamar. Tamar and Tavy are etymologically connected, the one meaning the 'great Taw,' and the other the 'little Taw.' You will pass Crowndale, the birthplace of that great Devonshire worthy, Sir Francis Drake. At Tavistock I come to an anchor for a day or two at the Bedford. Charles the Second, who, when Prince of Wales, spent some very wet days here during the civil wars, used to say that, however fair it might be elsewhere, he was sure it was raining at Tavistock. I had nothing to complain of, however, beyond a series of passing showers, that left bright weather in the interval. As, however, I have arrived at the fair town which derives its name from the Tavy, I will now give my few words of discourse respecting the river itself.

The source of the Tavy lies on one of the loftiest parts of the moor, one of the most sequestered and unapproachable parts of the western wilderness of Dartmoor. 'Vast tracts of morass, bog, and heath stretch away on every side. Besides Furtor, few tors appear to break the deep-felt monotony of the dreary wilds around. Not a sheep-path or peat-stack gives token of the presence of man or beast; and the

heathfowl which may occasionally spring from the heather only prove that this, one of their last retreats, is seldom invaded by the sportsman.' Lower down the Tavy receives a stream, which is considered to form the northward boundary of the forest, and is appropriately called Rattlebrook. Lower still we reach Tavy Cleave, a range of tors to which a castellated character has been ascribed, swept by the Tavy as if by a moat. Below the Cleave the river-bed flows over a solid rocky surface. A bold eminence, called Gertor, or Great Tor, beetles down upon the stream, and so we get on to Mary Tavy. There are two picturesque hamlets, called respectively Mary Tavy and Peter Tavy, easily accessible from Tavistock. And there is another spot of especial beauty which ought to be visited, where the river Walkham meets the Tavy. Keep up the Tavy till you come to the Walkham, and keep along the Walkham as long as you can, and you will not regret it. Both the valley of the Tavy and the valley of the Walkham are far-famed. If you only go far enough up the Walkham you will skirt Mist Tor, perhaps the finest, and be able to puzzle yourself with some of the most remarkable Celtic remains. There are especially some curious stone avenues, respecting which the tradition runs that they were erected when wolves haunted the valleys, and winged serpents the hills. Where the Tavy and Walkham meet is called the Double Water. At this point there is, or was, a bridge of a peculiar and perilous kind, and common enough in the Dartmoor region. A single plank is flung across the stream from rock to rock, with only a frail handrail for support. The depth generally is not great, except, as frequently happens, the river is swollen with rains; but then the current is exceedingly rapid, and you may be carried away in a moment to some deep pool where you are out of your depth. I confess that I ingloriously drew back, but not unwisely so, for the ascertained number of deaths by accidents at such bridges is not in-

considerable. It is the Dartmoor tradition that every year the Tamar claims a life, and if any year should pass without a death, he claims two lives the next year.

The Tavy merrily courses along in the rear of your hotel. The Bedford occupies a portion of the site of the old abbey. I would make grateful mention of another portion of the abbey, which is converted into as excellent a public library as I have ever seen in a small provincial town. I have very happily beguiled there some of those showery hours of which Prince Charles complained. Other portions of the abbey are amicably shared between the vicarage and a dissenting chapel. Sensible fellows those old monks, in choosing a site sheltered by surrounding hills with this sparkling river, richer, doubtless, in fish than now. I noticed various fishermen, however, in the summer evenings; and that walk hard by the abbey, where a bridge is arched over a cascade, is to my mind about the prettiest thing in Tavistock. But Tavistock claims to be the fruitful mother of many distinguished men, and its roll is certainly remarkable, including the great lawyer, Glanville, whose monument is in the church. Its localities are beloved by poets and artists, and few scenes are more picturesque than the favourite haunts by the Tavy. At Tavistock the river is of some little breadth; and the gnarled trees, whose roots are deep among the water flags, almost overshadow the channel.

The finest point on the Tamar is within a manageable distance of Tavistock. Milton Abbot, six miles off, is the point for Endsleigh. Only do not be deceived by the guide-books that tell you there is an inn there; the old tumbledown little public does not deserve the name; but either return to Tavistock, or push onwards to Launceston. Endsleigh is the seat of the untitled Mr. Russell, who is the heir to the dukedom of Bedford. It is now many years ago since a duchess of Bedford was beyond measure delighted by a view, which she obtained near Milton Abbot, of the river Tamar. And

well she might be, for the scene is thoroughly Swiss—as nobly Swiss as any scene of pure English beauty can become. For the silver lines of the river flow through ravine and gorge, and thick woods cover their abrupt slopes, save where, close by one side of the water, there are lawns and pastures for cattle, and purling brooks from the higher grounds pour down into the Tamar; and rocks are not wanting, nor anything which can lend either softness, or sublimity, or loveliness to the prospect. The duchess with a clear eye detected the marvellous excellence of the site. This Duchess Georgiana was one of those great people, Achates, who, much more easily than you or I, could have a romantic wish accomplished. She chose the site, and her husband, the Duke John, built her a cottage, and her four sons laid the first stone. It is a cottage, you understand, not for a cottager but for a duchess. I have been in some lovely Italian villas, embowered cottages overlooking the waters of Como and Lugano, but, in its way, Endsleigh is as pretty as anything of the kind. The cottage was built by Wyatt, who restored Windsor for George the Fourth, and got knighted in consequence, and then elongated his name to Wyatville, I suppose to suit his new honours better. There was some difficulty at first about going to Endsleigh, as Earl Russell was staying there with his kinsman; but I took the first opportunity of doing this part of the Tamar. One of the first objects which met my view was one on which I felt sure that the noble earl's gaze had also lingered. This was a statuette, in an external recess, of Earl Grey engaged in reading the Reform Act. But you have no business to think of politics at Endsleigh; you should rather think of 'love in a cottage;' a cottage so admirably contrived that, as poverty cannot come in at the door, so you may hope that love will not fly out of the window. You have here lawn and parterre, terrace and dell, grotto and arbour, rosary and rockery; and that noble Tamar, flashing gemlike is quite the gem of the prospect. You pass through

the park to the shore of the rapid transparent stream, and then you see a boat moored, and your call will soon summon the woodman from his cottage, and then you may ramble at your will. Only, as the late Duke of Bedford was once heard to say that he had cut forty miles of rides through the woods, you had better not wander too far from the house and grounds, unless you are acting on a pre-arranged plan. I will venture to transcribe for your edification, Achates, a remark which I have made on one of the features of this sequestered and wonderfully pretty place. 'The constant presence of water, and the admirable way in which it is managed, form a peculiar feature of Endleigh. A fountain faces the orange and lemon trees blossoming in the open air; a taller fountain rises amid the flower and fern-covered rocks near the conservatories. From the high grounds above the cottage little streams run down towards the river, or the small shadowed lake; a stream in a granite basin skirts the garden; there are continual spoutings from granite lips; and on the cushioned

seat of the verandah you are well-nigh lulled to sleep by the sound of flowing or falling water.'

You will hardly match this Endleigh scenery with anything else either on the Tamar or Tavy. My limits will only allow me to take a final glance at the source of the Tamar. That lies in a very different kind of country, near the rock-bound coast of the north of the peninsula of Cornwall and Devon. Here the Tamar drains from a dreary morass amid bleak hills, 'divided into fuzzy crofts and rush-covered swamps.' But you will find near here what you would least expect—fine examples of the ecclesiastic and domestic architecture of Mr. G. G. Scott. Having come to the source, you may either go east to Clovelly, or westward to 'wild Dundagil, by the Cornish sea,' wonderful localities, both of them, Achates; but the Tamar and Tavy, less visited by travellers, are in their way equally deserving of exploration; and if you will go there this summer, I will with pleasure go over the ground again with you.

COUNTY COURTS.

A COUNTY-COURT summons is not by any means a pleasant thing to find lying on one's breakfast-table, amongst the ham and eggs; nor a pleasant thing to receive from the wife of one's bosom on returning from a nice little tour in search of health or business; in fact, it is not a pleasant thing to be acquainted with under any circumstances. It comes generally as the climax to a whole series of annoyances. Dunning letters from Threadneedle, a tailor on scientific principles, who has pressing bills to meet in the course of a few days, are moderately unwelcome, as everybody who has grazed the edges of debt must be perfectly aware; and the matter becomes an absolute nuisance as soon as Threadneedle's lawyer begins to have a hand in it, and sends little reminders: *via* the Post Office in St. Martin's-le-Grand.

But the County Court summons is a culmination. The appointment of some definite limit for the payment of Threadneedle's account is painfully destructive of that beautiful vagueness which characterizes the earlier stages of pecuniary liability. One always *means* to pay, as a matter of course; but the poetry of debt is knocked on the head the moment that a date is fixed. There is something so shabby in being honest on compulsion.

Our own acquaintance with County Courts is entirely casual; and we state the fact in order that the reader may acquit us of having derived any experience of them in the character of a defendant. There are about sixty of them scattered through England and Wales; and they are all so much alike that, if you have seen one, depend upon it the other fifty-nine are not worth

the trouble of a visit. In Middlesex there are eight metropolitan districts; — Westminster, Brompton, Mary-le-bone, Bloomsbury, Clerkenwell, Shoreditch, Bow, and White-chapel. On the Surrey side of London, Wandsworth is the only district that enjoys the luxury of a County Court. We have only looked in at one of these redoubtable establishments, 'the name of which'—as the penny-a-liners put it—'for obvious reasons we conceal.' It is not without a slight feeling of nervous awe that the freest and most independent Briton enters a sanctuary where the practice of the law is carried on; but we soon shake it off, and leave the task of wincing to the galled jade, in the full confi-

dence that our own withers are unwrung. Our acute sense of the ridiculous gradually assumes a mastery over our veneration for justice. We begin to notice things, and everything that we notice makes us laugh. Our companion, who is even more utterly destitute of shame than ourselves, produces a small note-book, and commences making sketches—probably with a distant view of 'London Society' in his mind's eye. He caricatures the judge, to begin with; and we also mean to have a fling at the judge.

His life must be rather a hard one; there is not much dignity in deciding these paltry County Court squabbles. Probably, the most equitable method would consist in taking



a copper coin of the realm, tossing it gracefully into the air, and leaving the rights of the case to chance. The head of Queen Victoria might establish the justice of the plaintiff's claim, and the figure of Britannia might absolve the defendant. One can scarcely help speculating upon the private financial habits of a functionary who is called upon to give so many judgments respecting debt and credit. Could a judge have a summons in his own court served upon him, supposing that he declined paying a hairdresser for his last official wig? This catastrophe is not likely to occur, we hope, seeing that these worthies never receive less than twelve hun-

dred pounds a year for their labours. The office is a freehold for life, inability or misbehaviour constituting the only liabilities to removal. May we venture to suggest, by the way, that the cause of justice would lose nothing (and might gain a little) by having the County Court judges occasionally shifted from one district into another? It is just possible that, through constantly hearing the same attorneys and barristers, the hearer might imbibe just the least prejudice in the world; he might now and then weigh the general merits of a counsel (whom he knows perfectly) rather than the particular merits of a case (of which he knows nothing beforehand), and

give judgment accordingly. If this reason is not a sufficient one, we can give another; the change of scene would render a judge's work less monotonous, and consequently more endurable.

The usher is very solemn, and very imposing. He rather reminds us of the immortal footmen that poor John Leech drew by the dozen. Leech's footmen were always large, raw-boned men, with full whiskers; this description applies exactly to the County Court usher. He is getting bald in the service of justice, and his remaining hairs are

slightly silvered; but he is proud of the fact, and would rather dye than wear a wig. From a long and unvaried career spent in the County Court line of business, the usher seems to have imbibed a profound contempt for money; he looks upon it simply as the root of all summonses. We should like to see anybody offer him a half-crown; he would probably treat it as contemptuously as Julius Cæsar treated a whole one, putting it by with the back of his hand, in the good old traditional manner. Doubtless, the usher is a man of tolerable sub-



stance, who pays his way regularly, and has no dealings with the bailiff, save amicable ones; but even grey locks cannot ensure him against being caricatured.

We have been lucky enough—or sufficiently unlucky—to see the softer sex engaged in pecuniary disputes. Ladies are tenacious in these matters; much more tenacious, we fancy, than the lords of creation. Convince one of these gentle creatures that she owes another of these gentle creatures money, and she will pay it; but the difficulty of convincing her almost amounts to an impossibility. If Mrs. Lockstitch sells Mrs. Hem-

ming a sewing machine, it is the obvious duty of the latter lady to pay for it. Well and good; but suppose that the instrument should prove to be deficient in every quality that makes a sewing machine respectable—what then? The elements of litigation are at once let loose. Mrs. L. wants the money, and Mrs. H. does *not* want the goods; but the goods have been bought, and it is urged, with some faint shadow of propriety, that they ought consequently to be paid for. The difference of opinion is referred, very properly, to a County Court, where the plaintiff and the defendant indulge in mutual recriminations, of a class which it

would be gross flattery to call irrelevant. Judgment is probably given in favour of the plaintiff, in which case the defendant will go down to her grave with a firm belief in

the mal administration of justice throughout Great Britain. Should the victory be decided for the defendant, the plaintiff will descend into the vale of years with a griev-



ance upon her mind; that County Court business will figure as a prominent topic at neighbouring tea-parties for the remainder of her natural life.

The shopkeeper figures largely in County Courts. Whenever he can spare a moment from his labours at the counter, he appears to spend it in issuing summonses. Chemists



are great sinners in this respect; they seem to physic their customers into a state of rude health on purpose to persecute them about

money immediately afterwards, just as the cannibals fatten their prisoners for eating. Every bottle is a masked battery, and every pill a

pitfall. Tailors and wine merchants are also in the habit of getting very troublesome about their accounts. Shopkeepers who appeal to the law are generally short, and generally

stout. They have a confident manner about them; for where is the tradesman who dares to appear as plaintiff without having right upon his side? It requires a man of some imagin-



ation to do *that*, and imagination is an utter stranger to trade. The shopkeeper speaks very softly, 'with bated breath and whispering humbleness,'

whenever he makes his appearance in a County Court. He never seems to demand his money, but merely to suggest that he should rather like



to have it than otherwise. We need scarcely remark that he generally succeeds in getting it.

The working man, who reads his morning papers with assiduity, and

entertains the strongest possible opinions on the subject of Reform, occasionally gets into difficulties that require the interference of a County Court for their solution. He

is just clever enough to get paid for his work beforehand now and then, and the possession of lucre sometimes makes him too proud or too lazy to finish it. As a defendant he requires a good deal of convincing; having probably studied Mr. John Stuart Mill more as a politician than a teacher of abstract logic. In the present instance he is tall and thin; and the latter peculiarity is perhaps accounted for by the fact of his having walked a considerable distance in every procession that has been organized by the Reform League since the commencement of the agitation. One is rather sorry to see him in a County Court, on consideration of his highly probable wife and family.

The attorney swarms at County Courts; he is, of course, well up in every possible description of claim, and ready with every possible description of defence. Defences are, of course, multitudinous; the most usual ones being—

1. Set-off.
2. Infancy.
3. Coverture.
4. Statute of Limitations.
5. Bankruptcy.
6. Insolvency.

'Set-off' implies a case of mutual debt between plaintiff and defendant. The other grounds of defence mentioned need no explanation. Sometimes the attorney engages a barrister as counsel, but more frequently acts himself for one of the parties in the suit. His appearance is as a rule semi-legal, and semi-military: he is bald-headed, and wears a moustache.

It is impossible to convey much information about County Court practice without growing tedious. Allow us, in conclusion, to suggest that the reader had better be content with what we have told him than seek actual experience for himself, either as plaintiff or defendant, especially avoiding the latter position.



ANECDOTE AND GOSSIP ABOUT CLUBS.

PART III.

THE 'Spectator' seems to have issued secret commissions for the discovery of clubs of an unusual or piquant character; and by the researches of his spies was made aware of the existence of a Club of Parish Clerks, which met that its members might concoct in comfort their bills of mortality, and drink to the memory of the departed. A Lawyers' Club, also, was unearthed, whose practice it was to meet stealthily for the purpose of discussing the respective cases which each member happened to have on hand. The object of this Club is unhandsomely represented to have been the furtherance of fraud and deceit—an object which we happily know to have been impossible.

There existed a Club of poor creatures who could only meet by the sufferance of their wives, or as they furtively evaded their jurisdiction. But the Club of the Henpecked has been long defunct; that is, it expired just a month before the marriage of the most exemplary matron who reads this article, and shows no symptoms of revival so long as her daughters are inclined so well as at present to follow in her footsteps.

The Henpecked Club was chiefly worthy of notice because it served to introduce an association in which the ladies are brought into considerable prominence; and so helps us over the chasm which would otherwise separate male and female societies. We owe to the 'Spectator' the registration of a few Ladies' Clubs, only one or two of which, as his account of them was evidently written at a time when he ought to have been better employed, we intend to honour with a momentary notice. The Club of She-Romps pretty sufficiently indicates its objects, which were to play high, to quarrel, to break fans, tear petticoats, flounces, furbelows, and to destroy all other, even the most sacred, curiosities of female apparel; and once a month to *demolish a prude*, inveigled for that purpose

into their place of meeting. The 'Spectator' was invited to pay them a visit, any rule forbidding the admission of a gentleman notwithstanding; but from a mingled feeling of fear and gallantry he forbore to avail himself of the flattering invitation.

The Widow Club consisted, on the 30th June, 1714, of nine experienced dames, who took their places once a week about a large oval table. It may be described generally as an association of *Wives of Bath*, bent on contracting matrimony as often as they commodiously and profitably could. *Ex unâ disce omnes*; Mrs. President was a person who had successfully disposed of six husbands, and was determined forthwith to take a seventh, being of opinion that there was as much virtue in the touch of a seventh husband as of a seventh son. The great object of each member, in short, was to achieve her own disqualification.

Manchester men are nearly as celebrated as are ancient mariners for spinning a yarn. A particular one which came into our hands a few months ago seems to have got a double twist in it—the twist first of falsity, and second of ill-nature. It is the manufacture of the London correspondent of the 'Manchester Examiner,' and is entirely apropos of Ladies' Clubs of the very last year in this very city of London. 'We have,' he gravely informed his Lancashire *clientèle* last April, 'as you know, been getting tolerably fast in our manners at the West-End. The present season has witnessed a further development of feminine independence. "Ladies' Clubs" are this year the "go" in the most fashionable circles. The young and unmarried ladies do not take part in them to any great extent; the "frisky matrons" there reign supreme. Although these assemblies, which are held, as a general rule, in the afternoon, at the houses of the members, are called "Ladies' Clubs,"

gentlemen are not excluded. A ticket to the "Scufflers," or to the "Jolly Dogs,"—those are the names of two of the most fashionable—is reckoned a great favour, and can only be obtained by those who are in high favour with presiding authorities, amongst whom more than one duchess occupies a prominent position. The amusements consist of conversation and smoking, the ladies doing their part manfully with their cigarettes. To give you some idea of the freedom of manners which these *réunions* are intended to promote, I may state that the "Scufflers" are so called because at their gatherings chairs and tables are banished from the room, and the members sit or lounge on the floor or on low divans.

We can fancy 'Our London Correspondent' cottoning with some inebriated footman, who, out of gratitude for the half-pint of porter which he owed to the correspondent's munificence, told him a secret which he did not know himself. We at least do not intend to believe the paragraph, until the writer of it can produce evidence that he has himself been "scuffled" out of some one or other of the meeting-rooms of the Club, been smoked by his Anonymas the duchesses, or demolished *à la mode des* She-Romps, by the most able-bodied of the sisterhood.

• There is one club of the kind which Mr. Timbs has the temerity to call the 'Eccentric,' which claims recognition at our hands, because the particulars about it were furnished to the 'Guardian,' June 16, 1713, by one of the greatest of the class from which it recruited itself—Alexander Pope, to wit. We allude to the Club of Little Men, which was instituted on the shortest day of the year, and the inauguration of which was to be commemorated annually over a dish of *shrimps*. Members were not to exceed five feet in height, and they were required to glory in, rather than to be ashamed of, their pigmy proportions, under penalties varying according to the enormity of their breach of discipline. A fundamental principle of the club, and a

unanimous belief of the whole of its members was, that as the human race has constantly been decreasing in stature from the beginning until now, it is obviously the design of Nature that men should be little; 'and we believe,' says Bob Short, whom Pope personates in his epistle to Nestor Ironside, Esq., 'that all human kind shall at last grow down to perfection, that is to say, be reduced to our own measure.'

In spite of the very obvious soundness of this theory, several infatuated giants took it into their heads to open an opposition Club of Tall Men. This club soon numbered some thirty members; and met under the presidency of a Scotch Highlander, whose stature brought him 'within an inch of a show.' The smallest man in the club, measuring only six feet and a half, was, on account of his diminutiveness, appointed to officiate as secretary. 'If you saw us all together,' boasts this worthy, 'you would take us for the sons of Anak. Our meetings are held, like the old Gothic parliaments, *sub dio*, in open air; but we shall make an interest, if we can, that we may hold our assemblies in Westminster Hall, when it is not term time. I must add, to the honour of our club, that it is one of our society who is now finding out the longitude. The device of our public seal is a crane grasping a pigmy in his right foot.'

The laureate of the Club of Little Men is said to have been one Mr. Distich; and if he presumed to attack the Anakim in pentameters, he and his whole fraternity were to be demolished by *their* poet in Alexandrines.

Other clubs distinguished by the 'Guardian' are the Silent Club and the Terrible Club. The members of the latter were shrewdly suspected of veiling their natural cowardice behind an air of swagger and fury. The following are the

'Articles to be agreed upon by the members of the Terrible Club:

'*Imprimis*, That the club do meet at midnight, in the great armoury hall in the Tower, if leave can be obtained, the first Monday in every month.

'II. That the president be seated upon a drum at the upper end of the table, accoutred with a helmet, a basket-hilt sword, and a buff belt.

'III. That the president be always obliged to provide, for the first and standing dish of the club, a pasty of bull-beef, baked in a target made for that purpose.

'IV. That the members do cut their meat with bayonets instead of knives.

'V. That every member do sit to the table, and eat with his hat, his sword, and his gloves on.

'VI. That there be no liquor drunk but rack-punch, quickened with brandy and gunpowder.

'VII. That a large mortar be made use of for a punch-bowl.'

The successors of the Mohock Club, and other like associations for the cultivation of outlawry, took up a position of more cold-blooded opposition to whatever was reputable in morals, decent in manners, and venerable in religion. Clubs, of which blasphemy and licentiousness were the avowed bonds, were instituted in alarming numbers by men whose ambition it seemed to be to set up on earth a visible kingdom of the devil. One of these infamous societies was known by the name of the Hell-fire Club, and boasted the brilliant, unprincipled, and ill-fated Duke of Wharton amongst its badly-pre-eminent members. But we are not going to rake up the volcanic ashes of such clubs as these. Their archives may be left, for us, to rest in the fondly-regretful memory of their departed and unsainted members.

Before we bid a long farewell, however, to the Clubs which sprang up and died about the time of the 'Spectator,' we ought to devote a few words to those peculiar political associations known as Mug-House Clubs, the parent society of which met in a great hall in Long Acre during the winter season on the evenings of Wednesday and Saturday. The Club consisted of gentlemen, lawyers, and politicians, to the number of over a hundred, and was named from the fact that the members imbibed their liquor—which was limited to ale—out of

separate mugs, which, it is said, were fashioned on the model of Lord Shaftesbury's face, *vulgariter*, 'ugly mug.' Hence the euphonious designation.

Early in the eighteenth century the president of the Club is described as a grave old gentleman, in his own grey hair, and armed with the reverence due to nearly ninety years of life. His seat was an arm-chair raised above the level of those of the other members, whom it was his duty to keep in order and decorum. At the lower end of the room a harp discoursed its eloquent music, which was occasionally intermitted for the songs of various individuals of the company. Although at this epoch the Club were such exclusive devotees of harmony and good fellowship that politics seemed to be proscribed by their mere non-necessity, the Mug-House by-and-by became, in consequence of the change of dynasty and the different sentiments thereupon, 'a rallying-place for the most virulent political antagonism.' The Tories had it all their own way with the mob, and it seemed advisable for the friends of the Hanoverian succession to establish meeting-places throughout the metropolis, where loyal and well-affected citizens might assemble to keep each other in countenance, and serve as centres for the diffusion of their principles. Hence it came to pass that London was colonised by numbers of Mug-House Clubs, which were established as affiliated societies in St. John's Lane; at the Roebuck, in Cheap-side; at Mrs. Read's, in Salisbury Court, Fleet Street; at the Harp, in Tower Street; and the Roebuck, in Whitechapel. Besides these, others were instituted in less central localities—at the Ship, in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden; at the Black Horse, in Queen Street, near Lincoln's Inn Fields; at the Nag's Head, in James Street, Covent Garden; at the Fleece, in Burleigh Street, near Exeter Change; at the Hand and Tench, near the Seven Dials. There were several in Spital-fields, frequented by French refugees; one in Southwark Park; one in the Artillery Ground; and

another at the Magpie, now the Magpie and Stump, in the Old Bailey. 'At all these houses,' we are informed by Mr. Timbs, 'it was customary in the forenoon to exhibit the whole of the mugs belonging to the establishment in a row in front of the house.' The members of these societies offered their services to keep in order the mob, who nightly took possession of the streets in a most disorderly and seditious manner; and the collisions of the Jacobite rabble with the loyal irregulars of the Mug-Houses occupy a by no means inconsiderable portion of the politico-social records of the time.

In the autumn of 1715 the Loyal Club, in session at the Roebuck, in Cheapside, burnt the Pretender in effigy; and on the 4th of November in the same year the Jacobite rabble repaid the insult in kind by burning King William III. in the Old Jewry. The Mug-House gentry came to the rescue, cudgelled the disaffected, and bore off the image of Macaulay's hero in triumph to their head-quarters, the Roebuck. Of course the return compliment was paid on the morrow, November 5th, a day sacred to political and religious dissensions. The riot of Guy Fawkes' Day being quieted, there was peace for nearly a fortnight, when other and wide-spread riots arose in consequence of the Loyal Society meeting at the Roebuck to celebrate the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and of the mob assembling in St. Martin's-le-Grand for the purpose of burning the effigies of King William, King George, and the Duke of Marlborough. A general collision of forces supervened; and this, the principal disturbance of that year, was quelled by the Lord Mayor, who caused the dispersal of the rabble with the loss of one of their men done to death by a gun-shot wound as he was heading a party in an attack upon the Roebuck.

The next year, 1716, saw a renewal of hostilities. The loyalty of the Mug-House Clubs was stimulated by their poets, and their songs were extensively circulated. Marrowbones and cleavers gave forth

their exhilarating strains, in order to keep up the enthusiasm of the Jacobites; and the fight was further emphasized on either side by oaken cudgels and bludgeons, pokers, tongs, and fire-shovels.

Some cold water was thrown on the courage of the seditious unwashed when five of their number were convicted of riot and rebellion, and sentenced to be put to death at Tyburn; and a few years saw London completely released from the factional outrages with which its streets had been infested. The Mug-House Clubs, with this restoration of order, lost their significance and their occupation, and became no longer venerable or worthy of a chronicle.

We come now to a knot of Clubs whose lustre is still fresh in the memories of contemporary men—Clubs which, founded on a basis of political or fashionable affinities, find their most distinctive glory in the traditions of their colossal gambling transactions.

The Cocoa-Tree, which was the Tory Chocolate-House of the days of Queen Anne, first appears as a Club about the time of the attempt of the young Pretender to recover the throne of his ancestors. It was here that Gibbon, in 1762, encountered 'twenty or thirty of perhaps the first men in the kingdom in point of fashion and fortune supping at little tables covered with a napkin, in the middle of a coffee-room, upon a bit of cold meat, or a sandwich, and drinking a glass of punch.' Walpole, writing to Mann, February 6, 1780, records a then recent instance of high play. 'Within this week,' he says, 'there has been a cast at hazard at the Cocoa-Tree (in St. James's Street), the difference of which amounted to one hundred and fourscore thousand pounds. Mr. O'Birne, an Irish gamester, had won one hundred thousand pounds of a young Mr. Harvey, of Chigwell, just started into an estate by his elder brother's death. O'Birne said, "You can never pay me." "I can," said the youth; "my estate will sell for the debt." "No," said O.; "I will win the thousand—you shall throw for the odd ninety." Harvey

was fortunate enough to come off winner.

Almack's Club was established in Pall Mall, in 1764, 'by twenty-seven noblemen and gentlemen, including the Duke of Roxburghe, the Duke of Portland, the Earl of Strathmore, Mr. Crewe (afterwards Lord Crewe), and Mr. C. J. Fox.' The following are half-a-dozen culled from the original Rules of the Club:—

'No gaming in the eating-room, except tossing up for reckonings, on penalty of paying the whole bill of the members present.

'Dinner shall be served up exactly at half-past four o'clock, and the bill shall be brought in at seven.

'Almack shall sell no wines in bottles, that the Club approves of, out of the house.

'Any member of this Society that shall become a candidate for any other Club (old White's excepted), shall be, *ipso facto*, excluded, and his name struck out of the book.

'That every person playing at the new guinea table do keep fifty guineas before him.

'That every person playing at the twenty guinea table do not keep less than twenty guineas before him.'

Walpole, in a letter to Mann, February 2, 1770, says that 'the gaming at Almack's, which has taken the *pas* of White's, is worthy the decline of our empire, or commonwealth—which you please. The young men of the age lose ten, fifteen, twenty thousand pounds in an evening there. Lord Stavordale, not one-and-twenty, lost 11,000*l.* there last Tuesday, but recovered it by one great hand at hazard. He swore a great oath, "Now, if I had been playing *deep*, I might have won millions." His cousin, Charles Fox, shines equally there and in the House of Commons. He was twenty-one yesterday so'nnight, and is already one of our best speakers. Yesterday he was made a Lord of the Admiralty.' 'The play,' remarks Mr. Timbs, 'was certainly high—only for rouleaus of 50*l.* each, and generally there was 10,000*l.* in specie on the

table. The gamesters began by pulling off their embroidered clothes, and put on frieze greatcoats, or turned their coats inside outwards for luck. They put on pieces of leather (such as are worn by footmen when they clean the knives) to save their laced ruffles; and to guard their eyes from the light, and to prevent tumbling their hair, wore high-crowned straw hats with broad brims, and adorned with flowers and ribbons; masks to conceal their emotions when they played at quinz. Each gamester had a small, neat stand by him, to hold his tea, or a wooden bowl, with an edge of ormolu, to hold the rouleaus.'

'Almack's was subsequently Goose-tree's. In the year 1780, Pitt was then an habitual frequenter, and here his personal adherents mustered strongly.' Pitt entered into the gaming at Goose-tree's without reservation; his friend Wilberforce, after a very slight experience of the losses and gains of the faro-table, soon bade adieu to such vain pursuits.

Almack's Assembly Rooms were opened the year after the Club just adverted to—that is, in 1765—in King Street, St. James's. Here, 'in three very elegant new-built rooms,' as Gilly Williams records, in a letter to George Selwyn, 'there was opened a ten-guinea subscription, for which you have a ball and supper once a week for ten weeks. You may imagine by the sum the company is chosen; though, refined as it is, it will be scarce able to put old Soho (Mrs. Corneby's) out of countenance. The men's tickets are not transferable, so, if the ladies do not like us, they have no opportunity of changing us, but must see the same persons for ever.' And again: 'Our female Almack's flourishes beyond description. Almack's Scotch face, in a bag-wig, waiting at supper, would divert you, as would his lady, in a sack, making tea and curtsying to the duchesses.' This assembly is characterized by Walpole, five years after, as 'a Club of *both sexes*,' of which the foundresses were Mrs. Fitzroy, Lady Pembroke, Mrs. Meynell, Lady Molyneux, Miss Pelham, and Miss Lloyd. And the

veteran Horace proceeds to confess, with a blushing candour, that he was weak enough to be of them, choosing rather to be idle than morose. 'I can go,' says he, 'to a young supper without forgetting how much sand is run out of the hour-glass.'

The Society, everybody knows, was tolerably exclusive. 'Ladies Rochford, Harrington, and Holder-ness were black-balled, as was the Duchess of Bedford, who was subsequently admitted.' Play here was deep; scores were ruined, and units amassed large fortunes on the downfall of their friends.

Early in the present century, Almack's was, on the testimony of Captain Gronow, 'the seventh heaven of the fashionable world.' 'Many diplomatic arts, much finesse, and a host of intrigues, were set in motion to get an invitation to Almack's. Very often persons, whose rank and fortunes entitled them to the *entrée* any where, were excluded by the cliques of the lady patronesses; for the female government of Almack's was a pure despotism, and subject to all the caprices of despotic rule: it is needless to add that, like every other despotism, it was not innocent of abuses. The fair ladies who ruled supreme over this little dancing and gossiping world, issued a solemn proclamation, that no gentleman should appear at the assemblies without being dressed in knee-breeches, white cravat, and *chapeau bras*. On one occasion the Duke of Wellington was about to ascend the staircase of the ball-room dressed in black trousers, when the vigilant Mrs. Willis, the guardian of the establishment, stepped forward, and said, "Your Grace cannot be admitted in trousers;" whereupon the Duke, who had a great respect for orders and regulations, quietly walked away.'

The rooms, called now almost exclusively Willis's Rooms, have been accustomed to be let for balls, concerts, public meetings, and for miscellaneous purposes. The 'Quarterly Review' has seen in the decline of Almack's the dying out of that feeling of exclusiveness which formerly reigned in London society.

'In 1831 was published "Almack's," a novel, in which the leaders of fashion were sketched with much freedom, and identified in a "Key to Almack's," by Benjamin Disraeli.' But the allusions to Almack's in polite fiction are, as all our readers may know, well nigh innumerable.

Brookes's Club was originally a gaming Club, 'farmed at first by Almack,' then taken by Brookes, a wine-merchant and money-lender, described by Tickell as—

'Liberal Brookes, whose speculative skill,
Is hasty credit, and a distant bill;
Who, nursed in Clubs, disdains a vulgar trade,
Exults to trust, and blushes to be paid.'

The Club was removed in 1778 from Pall Mall to St. James's Street, but it did not answer well enough to prevent Mr. Brookes from dying poor about four years after. The list of members of this Club is a brilliant one, and is graced by the names of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Hume, Horace Walpole, Gibbon, Sheridan, and Wilberforce. Tickell, in 'Lines from the Hon. Charles Fox to the Hon. John Townshend, cruising,' thus invites Townshend to share in the pleasant dissipations of the Club:—

'Soon as to Brookes's thence thy footsteps bend,
What gratulations thy approach attend!
See Gibbon tap his box—auspicious sign.
That classic compliment and evil combine.
See Beauclerk's cheek, a tinge of red surprise,
And friendship gives what cruel health denies.
Important Townshend! what can thee withstand?
The lingering black ball lags in Boothby's hand.
Even Draper checks the sentimental sigh;
And Smith, without an oath, suspends the die.'

Endless would be the record of memorable sayings and doings that gather around this Club, if we had room to indulge in anything like an enumeration. Here is at least an epigram of Sheridan's, whose gentlemanly friend, the Prince of Wales, was an *habitué* of Brookes's. Whitbread, the great brewer, was complaining at the Club of the conduct of ministers in levying a war-tax on malt, and he had enlisted the sympathy of the entire company. Sheridan attempted consolation by inditing upon the back of a letter,

which he handed to Whitbread, the following lines:—

'They've raised the price of table drink;
What is the reason, do you think?
The tax on malt 's the cause, I hear,—
But what has malt to do with beer?'

Fox, whether at Brookes's or elsewhere, was a desperate gamester; and Lord Tankerville assured Mr. Rogers that Fox once played cards with Fitzpatrick at Brookes's from ten o'clock at night till near six o'clock the next afternoon, a waiter standing by to tell them 'whose deal it was,' they being too sleepy to know. Fox once won about eight thousand pounds, and one of his bond-creditors, who soon heard of his good luck, presented himself and asked for payment. 'Impossible, sir,' replied Fox; 'I must first discharge my debts of honour.' The bond-creditor remonstrated. 'Well, sir, give me your bond.' It was delivered to Fox, who tore it in pieces and threw them into the fire. 'Now, sir,' said Fox, 'my debt to you is a debt of honour,' and immediately paid him.

The manoeuvre by which Sheridan, in collusion with the Prince of Wales, was, after being black-balled by George Selwyn and Lord Bessborough, at length admitted of Brookes's, is a little history, of which one version or other—for details vary and are hard to fix—is known to most people. Equally familiar, and equally varying in details, is the story of the admission of 'Fighting Fitzgerald;' but this story has lately been cruelly questioned by the sceptics of the 'Athenæum.' According to the received legend, 'Admiral Keith Stewart proposed Fitzgerald as a member of Brookes's Club, because he knew such a candidate would not be elected. All the balls in the ballot-box proved to be black; but Admiral Stewart is represented as stooping to a falsehood through fear of the great bully and duellist, and sending him a message that, as there was one black ball against him, he was not elected. Fitzgerald affected to suppose that an error had occurred, and refused to believe otherwise, when successive messages reached him that *two*, and, finally,

a totality of black balls had rejected his candidature. Fitzgerald, prince of ruffians, rushed into the club-room, asked each gentleman there if he had voted against him, and we ['Athenæum,' March 3, 1866] are required to believe that some of the noblest men in the land told a lie, and answered "No!" out of fear of a man whom, on taking possession of a seat as if he were a member, they treated with the greatest contempt, and against whose future attempts to enter they provided stringent means! The whole story is incredible.'

Arthur's Club, established more than a century since, is another of kindred character. It was located in St. James's Street, and named after 'Mr. Arthur, the master of White's Chocolate-House in the same street.' He died in 1761, and the establishment passed into the hands of Mr. Mackreth, who had married Arthur's only child. Mackreth had the honour of representing Castle Rising in parliament, and afterwards achieved the distinction of knighthood. White's Club, originally established as White's Chocolate-House, on the west side of St. James's Street, dates from 1698, and in 1733 was kept by Mr. Arthur, mentioned above. On the 28th of April of this year the house was consumed by fire, when young Arthur's wife distinguished herself by leaping out of a second-floor window upon a feather bed, without sustaining material injury. Hogarth borrowed the idea of this fire to give *clat* to some of the plates of his 'Rake's Progress.' White's enjoyed rather an evil reputation. Early in its history dashing highwaymen had there sipped their chocolate or thrown their main, before proceeding to exercise the more technical branch of their profession on Bagshot Heath. And later, when from an open chocolate-house it had become a club-house, it was notorious for its excessive indulgence in the most reckless play. 'I have heard,' says Swift, 'that the late Earl of Oxford, in the time of his ministry, never passed by White's Chocolate-House (the common rendezvous of infamous sharpers and noble cullies)

without bestowing a curse upon that famous Academy as the bane of half the English nobility.'

'Colley Cibber,' to quote Davies's 'Life of Garrick,' 'had the honour to be a member of the great Club at White's; and so, I suppose, might any other man who wore good clothes and paid his money when he lost it. But on what terms did Cibber live with this society? Why, he feasted most sumptuously, as I have heard his friend Victor say, with an air of triumphant exultation, with Mr. Arthur and his wife, and gave a trifle for his dinner. After he had dined, when the club-room door was opened, and the Laureate was introduced, he was saluted with loud and joyous exclamations of "O King Cole! Come in, King Cole!" and "Welcome, welcome, King Colley!" And this kind of gratulation, Mr. Victor thought, was very gracious and very honourable.'

Bets were made at White's on the most trivial or the most momentous of events—which out of two ladies would first present her husband with an heir, or leave him a widower, and upon the contingency of the said widower marrying again.

'One of the youth at White's,' Walpole informs Mann, 'has committed a murder, and intends to repeat it. He betted 1500*l.* that a man could live twelve hours under water; hired a desperate fellow, sunk him in a ship, by way of experiment, and both ship and man have not appeared since. Another man and ship are to be tried for their lives, instead of Mr. Blake, the assassin.'

Walpole found at White's a very remarkable entry in their wager-book, which is still preserved. 'Lord Mountford bets Sir John Bland twenty guineas that Nash outlives Cibber.' 'How odd,' says Walpole, 'that these two old creatures, selected for their antiquities, should live to see both their wagers put an end to their own lives! Cibber is within a few days of eighty-four, still hearty, and clear, and well. I told him I was glad to see him look so well. "Faith," said he, "it is very well that I look at all." As it turned out, the bet would have been

in Mountford's favour. Cibber died in 1757, while Nash lived till the year 1761.

A man dropped down at the door of White's: he was carried into the house. Was he dead or not? The odds were immediately given and taken for and against. It was proposed to bleed him. Those who had taken the odds the man was dead protested that the use of a lancet would affect the fairness of the bet.

Walpole gives some of these narratives as good stories 'made on White's.' A parson coming into the Club on the morning of the earthquake of 1750, and hearing bets laid whether the shock was caused by an earthquake or by blowing-up of powder-mills, went away in horror, protesting they were such an impious set that he believed that if the last trump were to sound they would bet puppet-show against judgment.

But the Club is now, as, happily, most modern institutions are, comparatively in the odour of sanctity.

'Boodlee's Club, originally the "Savoir vivre," which,' says Mr. Timbs, 'with Brookes's and White's, forms a trio of nearly coeval date, and each of which takes the present name of its founder, is No. 28, St. James's Street. In its early records it was noted for its costly gaieties, and the "Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers, 1773," commemorates its epicurism:

"For what is Nature? Ring her changes round,
Her three flat notes are water, plants, and
ground;

Prolong the peal, yet, spite of all your clatter,
The tedious chime is still ground, plants, and
water;

Lo, when some John his dull invention racks,
To rival Boodlee's dinners or Almack's,
Three uncouth legs of mutton shock our eyes,
Three roasted geese, three buttered Apple pies."

'Boodlee's is chiefly frequented by country gentlemen, whose status has been thus satirically insinuated by a contemporary. "Every Sir John belongs to Boodlee's, as you may see, for when a waiter comes into the room and says to some aged student of the 'Morning Herald,' 'Sir John, your servant is come,' every head is mechanically thrown up in answer to the address."

Captain Gronow relates that some

gentlemen of both White's and Brookes's had on one occasion the honour to dine with the Prince Regent. Compassionating the members of these clubs for the monotony of their fare at dinner, his Royal Highness summoned his cook, Watier, on the spot, to ask him if he would take a house and organise a dinner Club. Watier assented, and hence the Club which bore his name. Macao was played at Watier's to a ruinous extent, and 'the Club,' according to Mr. Raikes, 'did not endure for twelve years altogether: the pace was too quick to last; it died a natural death in 1819 from the paralysed state of its members; the house was then taken by a set of blacklegs, who instituted a common bank for gambling. To form an idea of the ruin produced by this short-lived establishment among men whom I have so intimately known, a cursory glance to the past suggests a melancholy list, which only forms a part of its deplorable results. None of the dead reached the average age of man.

'One evening at the Macao table, when the play was very deep, Brummell, having lost a considerable stake, affected, in his farcical way, a very tragic air, and cried out, "Waiter, bring me a flat candlestick and a pistol!" Upon which Bligh (a notorious madman, and one of the members of Watier's), who was sitting opposite to him, calmly produced two loaded pistols from his coat-pocket, which he placed on the table, and said, "Mr. Brummell, if you are really desirous to put a period to your existence, I am extremely happy to offer you the means, without troubling the waiter." The effect upon those present may easily be imagined, at finding themselves in the company of a known madman who had loaded weapons about him.'

Crockford's Club, also noted for its devotion to play, was instituted in 1827, in the house No. 20, on the west side of St. James's Street. Crockford had begun life with a fish-basket, and ended with the 'most colossal fortune that was ever made by play. He began,' according to the 'Edinburgh Review,' 'by

taking Watier's old club-house, in partnership with a man named Taylor. They set up a hazard-bank, and won a great deal of money, but quarrelled and separated at the end of the first year. Taylor continued where he was, had a bad year, and failed. Crockford removed to St. James's Street, had a good year, and immediately set about building the magnificent club-house which bears his name. It rose like a creation of Aladdin's lamp, and the genii themselves could hardly have surpassed the beauty of the internal decoration, or furnished a more accomplished *maître d'hôtel* than Ude. To make the company as select as possible, the establishment was regularly organised as a Club, and the election of members vested in a committee. "Crockford's" became the rage, and the votaries of fashion, whether they liked play or not, hastened to enrol themselves. The Duke of Wellington was an original member, though (unlike Blücher, who repeatedly lost everything he had at play) the Great Captain was never known to play deep at any game but war or politics. Card-tables were regularly placed, and whist was played occasionally; but the aim, end, and final cause of the whole, was the hazard-bank, at which the proprietor took his nightly stand, prepared for all comers. *Le Wellington des Joueurs* lost 23,000*l.* at a sitting, beginning at twelve at night and ending at seven the following evening. He and three other noblemen could not have lost less, sooner or later, than 100,000*l.* apiece. Others lost in proportion (or out of proportion) to their means; but we leave it to less-occupied moralists and better calculators to say how many ruined families went to make Mr. Crockford a millionaire, for a millionaire he was in the English sense of the term, after making the largest possible allowance for bad debts. A vast sum, perhaps half a million, was sometimes due to him; but as he won, all his debtors were able to raise, and easy credit was the most fatal of his lures. He retired in 1840, much as an Indian chief retires from a hunting country when

there is not game enough left for his tribe.'

Theodore Hook, whom, as a Clubman, we may have occasion again to notice, was accustomed to frequent Crockford's, where play did not begin till late. He would often, after going the round of the Clubs, wind up with 'half an hour' at Crockford's. In order to avoid the night air, against which he had been cautioned by his medical attendant, he was accustomed not to leave the gaming-house for Fulham, where

he resided, till about four or five o'clock in the morning. After Crockford's death, the club-house was sold by his executors for 2900*l.*, held on lease, of which thirty-two years were unexpired, subject to a yearly rent of 1400*l.* It is said that the decorations alone cost 94,000*l.* The interior was re-decorated in 1849, and opened for the Military, Naval, and County Service Club, but was closed again in 1851. It has been for several years a dining-house—the 'Wellington.'

ARTISTS' NOTES FROM CHOICE PICTURES.

Perdita.

IN the Catalogue of the Sheepshanks Collection this picture is entitled 'Florizel and Perdita.' But Leslie himself called it simply 'Perdita'—nothing more: and the painter may be supposed to have known the purpose of his picture better than the catalogue-maker. I, for one, should certainly leave the matter to him in every case. In the present instance the catalogue-maker's alteration is assuredly not an improvement, but very much the opposite. Perdita is not merely the principal figure of the composition but the whole interest of it is centred on her. The cynosure of neighbouring eyes, she is yet under eclipse. The painter has set himself to shadow forth the two phases of her existence—the visible semblance, the veiled reality. Seeming but a shepherd's, she is truly a king's daughter.

'This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever Ran on the green-sward: nothing she does or seems

But smacks of something greater than herself; Too noble for this place.'

Florizel is in the picture: but so is Dorcas, so are Polixenes and Camillo. They are there as the flowers are there: the story would be incomplete without them. It is Perdita who makes the picture, and the painter knew what he was doing when he entitled it 'Perdita.'

But the catalogue-maker has done Leslie a further involuntary injus-

tice, and is likely to mislead the visitor, by quoting, as the motive of the painting, the lines—

'O! Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted, thou lett'st fall
From Dis's waggon

. . . . these I lack,
To make you garlands of; and, my sweet friend,
To strew him o'er and o'er.'

'Winter's Tale,' Act IV., Scene 3.

Looking at the arrangement of the picture and the action of the several personages, and especially of Perdita, the spectator who had only these lines in the catalogue to guide him, must have a wondrously keen perception if he could discern the appropriateness of the painter's treatment of his subject, or appreciate the subtler touches of his genius. The passage which Leslie had in his mind, and that which he quoted for the Academy Catalogue, occurs earlier in the scene, and refers to an antecedent circumstance, and quite another turn of thought: it is that where, welcoming the guests, she presents them with flowers—she is holding the marigold between her fingers—her mind the while running into dreamy musings:—

'Here's flowers for you;
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;
The marigold that goes to bed with the sun,
And with him rises weeping: these are flowers
Of middle summer, and, I think, they are given
To men of middle age: you are very welcome.'

Pictures of the order of that now before us may be arranged under



From the Painting by C. R. Leslie.]

PERDITA.

[See "Artist's Notes from Choice Pictures."

two broad divisions: those in which the painter invents his story; and those in which he derives it from the pages of the poet or novelist. Hogarth or Wilkie may stand as the type of the painters who invent, Leslie of those who borrow their topics. It is not often that an artist adopts indifferently either method. Mulready has, however, done so, and done so successfully. Scarcely an instance, on the other hand, can be cited where Leslie has not chosen his text from some famous writer. Even pictures like his 'May Day in the reign of Elizabeth,' or the 'Fairlop Fair,' would hardly on examination be pronounced exceptions. That which looks most strictly an original subject, 'Who can this be from?' (No. 112 in the Sheepshanks Collection) has so much the air of a passage from an essayist that on seeing it you involuntarily try to recollect the suggestion in the 'Tatler' or 'Spectator.'

This practice of borrowing the incident of a picture has sometimes been regarded as the result of deficiency of imagination or want of originality, and as stamping the work therefore with a mark of inferiority. There can be no doubt that a certain native impulse or inventive talent is required in order to devise an original theme for a picture, and that the same talent is not called into exercise when a subject is taken ready-made from a book. If the subject so taken is described in detail and followed implicitly there may indeed be little more invention required in representing it than in a piece of mechanical copying. But this is not the procedure of the true artist. He goes to his author for suggestion rather than for information, and embodies in form and colour just those fugitive hints which to the ordinary reader convey the least definite impression.

And if this latter kind of painting should on analysis be found to fall short in some measure in its claims on the imaginative faculty as compared with the former, it must be admitted that it makes greater demands on the artist's acquired knowledge and tact. The spectator, if

the subject be taken from a familiar passage in some favourite author, has a notion of his own respecting it, which he by no means wishes to undo, and is not very ready to exchange for another's. If the painter's conception accords with that he has formed, well: the painter is a man of taste and shall have his verdict. If not, the painter—however great he may be in other works—has blundered now. *This* is not the Jew that Shakespeare drew. Tennyson could never have dreamed of such a Mariana. Mulready's fine lady is not the homely Deborah of Goldsmith's 'Vicar;' and so on through the whole cycle of memories.

But whatever be the exact degree of merit assignable to the respective classes of productions, we must be cautious in denying the possession of original power to either. Else we might find ourselves landed on very untenable ground. Even the very play from which Leslie has drawn the inspiration for the picture before us would have to be deposed from its acknowledged rank; for Shakespeare, in 'The Winter's Tale,' has followed pretty closely the plot of Robert Greene's forgotten novel 'Pandosto.' And did not Tennyson find both title and suggestion of his 'Moated Grange,' and catch its mournful tone, from the famous passage in 'Measure for Measure,' where our great dramatist tells that 'at the moated grange resides the dejected Mariana?'

In truth nearly all depends on how the purpose is effected; in other words, on the genius of the artist. The illustration of the idea of a great poet by a man of mediocre ability is a thing not to be endured. A living embodiment of the same idea by a man of congenial mind adds a new value to it. And it is the intrinsic quality of Leslie's genius that he always seizes the inner spirit, and renders palpable the special flavour and subtlest essence of his author's conception. This, and his clear, keen appreciation of character, are the distinctive mental qualities of his works. His range of perception was limited. He could not grasp the sublime; he had no sympathy with the farcical. But no

man had a truer sense of quiet humour, none a more hearty love of whatever was gentle and generous and beautiful. And within his limits his sympathies were sufficiently comprehensive. His tastes were more literary than is common among artists. He read and illustrated with equal geniality the works of Shakspeare and Molière, of Fielding and Cervantes, Smollett and Goldsmith, of Addison and Sterne. And if you had not his delightful 'Autobiography' to assure you of the fact, you could have little doubt, after even a cursory examination of his pictures, that he had read and enjoyed the authors he illustrated, and did not merely turn over their pages to find subjects for his pencil. This it was that made him, what all who have really studied his pictures, along with those of his fellow-workers in the same line, will readily allow him to be, the greatest illustrative painter of the English School.

For the realization of a certain range of Shaksperian imaginings his pencil was eminently fitted. With humour he had polish. His sense of beauty was innate and his taste perfect. In all he touched are passages of genuine feeling and finished grace. He knew perfectly how to blend poetry with reality.

Among the most marvellous of even Shakspeare's wonderful creations are his female characters. Numerous as they are each has a distinct individuality; each is true to nature, or what we feel to be possible in nature; and each is the type of a class. No writer has conceived so wide a variety, each in her way an almost faultless example of the union of excellence in mind and person. And of all of them surely Perdita is one of the loveliest. Not much is seen of her, but nothing she does and not a syllable that she utters is out of keeping with her position, or contradicts the simplicity and purity of her nature. Even a stranger pronounces her at first sight 'the rarest of all women.'

'The most peerless piece of earth, I think,
That e'er the sun shone bright on.'

Whilst the enraptured Florizel declares

'Whate'er you do
Still betters what is done. When you speak,
sweet,
I'd have you do it ever
. . . . When you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that.'

It was no light task Leslie undertook in giving visible form to so exquisite a creature; and he was evidently conscious of the difficulty, and put forth all his powers. He has painted many beautiful women, but this is the loveliest of all. Even our artist, who is so skilful in rendering female beauty, has not expressed fully her exquisite grace and delicacy. Yet Leslie, whilst he has endowed her with the rarest loveliness, has preserved her proper personality. She is the Perdita of Shakspeare, as rich in worth as beauty. Sweet as is the expression of her countenance, there is yet an air of tender sadness in it that tells at once of the depth of her affection, and the foreboding that some evil is impending which must shortly blight it. Leslie is not often pathetic, but there is true pathos here. Curiously enough, this sad expression in Perdita's face is what seems first to arrest the attention of most casual observers. Stand by the picture awhile on a public day, and you will hear, as group after group clusters round it, the inquiry 'What is the story?' constantly repeated, and as constantly the ready answer, 'Disappointed Love.' But it needs only a moment's steady gaze to be satisfied that there is no trace of disappointment in that gentle face. There is deep feeling, sadness verging on tears, but it is the sadness due to a sense of uncertainty and mystery; to the feeling that the present is but a blissful dream from which there must soon be a dreary awakening. 'Tis but just now she has said

'O but, sir,
Your resolution cannot hold, when 'tis
Oppos'd, as it must be, by the power o' the king;
One of these two must be necessities,
Which then will speak; that you must change
this purpose,
Or I my life.'

Let us look now for a moment at

the picture as a picture. It is but of small dimensions—Leslie seldom employed a large canvas—low in colour, quiet in tone; altogether temperate and singularly unobtrusive. Originally there was perceptible in it something of that 'chalkiness' which was charged with justice against Leslie's later pictures, and, from which those of his middle, and on the whole, best, period were not entirely free. But thirty years have passed since it was painted, and Time has touched it with a gentle finger. In no respect has it worsened by age, and in most it has improved. The colour is mellow, the contrast of light and shadow somewhat more subdued, whilst the flesh tints retain all their freshness and purity, and have acquired by comparison more warmth and brilliancy. Especially is it so with the face of Perdita. Nothing can well surpass the natural red and white of her complexion, the pearly hue of her neck, or the soft round truthfulness of the modelling. This clear unsunned complexion, however, whilst it adds to the delicacy and refinement of her appearance, may seem a little at variance with her present condition as the shepherd's daughter, one who has been used to 'milk her ewes and weep.' Yet Leslie had the highest authority for painting her skin so fair. Florizel says to her—

'I take thy hand; this hand
As soft as dove's down, and as white as it;
Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow,
That's bolted by the northern blasts twice o'er.'

In point of execution the head and arms of Perdita are worthy the closest study of the young painter, and might cause the oldest to despair. The colours are laid in broadly and with a touch light and facile as gossamer; and though a practised eye can see that the details have been executed with a small pencil, hardly a trace of the pencil is any more visible than there is in the flesh-painting of Titian; and the last thing that any one would think of in looking at it would be the manner in which it was executed. There is in truth consummate art, but it is the art which conceals its operations.

Perdita is the centre of the picture by position as well as in virtue of being queen of the feast. The sun streams through the open lattice full upon her. It is the festival of the sheep-shearing, and she as its queen is dressed up in 'borrow'd haunts,' blushing to see herself so disguised, till Florizel assures her that

'These your unusual weeds to each part of you
Do give a life: no shepherdess; but Flora,
Peering in April's front.'

Of these unusual weeds, however, Leslie has been chary in the display. She has an amber-coloured silk scarf fastened across her shoulders, and her hair is garlanded with a wreath of the little wild convolvulus, but besides these there is none of that finery with which she

'Poor lowly maid
Most goddess-like's prankt up.'

Her dress is of the plainest cut, and of a blue so dark as hardly to be distinguished from black. Leslie disliked fantastic clothing; but some seems so evidently required here that its absence can only be explained by supposing that as the least of two evils he preferred departing from the strict letter of the text to incurring the risk of marring the tender grace and simplicity of Perdita's countenance. But his reserve in regard to Perdita's costume rendered necessary a like reserve with reference to the other characters. The Florizel of the 'Winter's Tale' we know whilst 'obsured with a swain's wearing,' was, like his mistress, so transformed that, as she tells him—

'But that our feasts
In every mess have folly, and the feeders
Digest it with a custom, I should blush
To see you so attir'd; sworn, I think,
To show myself a glass.'

Yet he, in truth, in the picture serves as a glass by the very plainness of his attiring. Florizel, indeed, is not one of Leslie's most successful personages. Like most gentlemen lovers he is rather insipid, or appears so to a looker-on. But he is a necessity in the picture, and he serves one good purpose there: he is an excellent foil to Perdita. He is plainly habited in a

tunic of a deep red-brown, which serves well to increase the brilliancy of his mistress's complexion.

Dorcas, who stands by Perdita's right hand (the Catalogue says it is Mopsa, but this is a mistake, as the writer would have seen if he had read the earlier part of Perdita's address), is also of great value in the picture as a contrast to her mistress. She is not vulgar, for Leslie never made the meanest female vulgar; but there is a ruddy sunburnt homeliness in her face and expression strikingly opposed to the grace and refinement of Perdita's. Leslie seems to have found it a difficult face to paint, for there are traces of labour and even of repetition in it; and our artist appears to have experienced a like difficulty in copying it; for as something of the loveliness of Perdita has escaped in the engraving, so some new refinement and beauty have been given to Dorcas.

The disguised king, Polixenes, and his friend Camillo, are the least satisfactory figures in the picture. They are too much like the disguised princes of the stage. Leslie was evidently at a loss how to deal

with them. Happily they are not obtrusive, but, oddly enough, the whole of the 'borrow'd flaunts' are their disguisings. Camillo's vermilion hat and cock's feather are plainly masquerade properties.

The scene is the interior of the shepherd's hut. A plain plastered wall is the simple background. A pair of shepherd's shears, the leathern wallet, a shelf with a few ordinary household articles, an unpainted deal table, are the fitting accessories. A feebler painter would have elaborated the furniture, and given us minute imitations of all sorts of nick-nackeries that could possibly be brought together in a shepherd's shieling. Leslie was happily free from all such coxcombry. He felt the poetry of the scene he was painting, and makes us feel it. His attention was fixed on sentiment and character, and we, in looking at the picture, no more think of the room and its garnishings than we should if we had witnessed such a scene in actual life. Enough is it, as Camillo declares, to gaze on that fair face,

'And only live by gazing.'



A STRANGE COURTSHIP.

'HE comes, you say, to-morrow?'

'Yes; he comes
With the next sun that smiles.—Shall you be glad?'

'O, more than glad!—My one, own brother! He
I never saw; so soon to take his way
To far Ionia.—And his tutor, too,
I think you said, comes with him? Read, read all;
Dear governess, the letter is to you.'

'I pass, dear Laura, a few flattering words
Your father writes—they praise me over-much;
Sir John is ever kind, most kind to me,
Me, your poor governess. I pass those words;
The rest runs thus:—"Pray let my children meet,
And be as much together as they will;
It is not well that children of one house
Should be bred up at distance. Soon my son
Starts for the old Greek Isles, where he shall take
His little sister's picture in his mind;
To live, a pleasant thought, in after years
When only they are left of all their house.
As for his tutor, a grave moody man,
As savage as a yet unmuzzled bear,
Show him, I pray, what courtesy you can,
The while my children romp beside the sea.
He has much learning: you well love old lore;
Perhaps he may prove less niggard of his speech
Than my son still reports him."

'How I wish
The horrid man would stay at Brasenose!'

'Nay, let us make the best we can of him.
A diamond sometimes shows but in the rough
A sorry gem at first.'

'How dull for you!
I and my brother playing on the beach,
My poor old aunt for ever wheeled about,
And you no one to talk to but this bear.'

'A little discipline may do me good.
You know you spoil me all, till I forget—
Almost, not quite,—that I am but a stray,
A weed on this great ocean of the world
Set floating early, tangled in the drift
That bears me on, close clinging here and there,
Where'er I find a gentle holding, dear:—
A little staff, like Laura, is enough
For me to cling to.'

Saying which, her arms
She wound about the light form of the girl,
And sealed a silent, life-long bond of love.

There stands an old grey castle by the sea
 Perched on a chalk-cliff hill, where tamarisk trees
 Wave to the wind, showing the bright waves through
 Their rosy stems,—like youthful fingers held
 Before the sun,—to screen the fairer face
 Of nature blooming amid flower-bed lawns
 That lie within the decked old court and keep.
 It is a place for spring-time, when the balls
 Of amber-flowered japonica drop down
 The ruined wall, like orbs from sceptred hands.
 It is a spot for lovers, and yet more
 For those denied of love. The place is rich
 With many memories of our English land :
 The lone may pause upon its antique ground
 And muse of battles, kings, and 'dusty death.'

Day after day, in arbourago so rich,
 Week after week, and month on rolling month,
 The woman-teacher and all-learned man
 Took counsel of the waters, rocks, and skies.
 And some slight sparring, too, of wits was theirs—
 A salt that savoured much the too stale bread,
 So duly served, of every-day discourse.

One eve, when they were resting 'mid the bowers,
 Looking abroad upon the motley crowd,
 Some bitter words of woman-hating spleen
 Broke from the man. To which she calm replied :

'We are, I think, sir, what you make of us.'

'Must we, then, answer for your every freak
 Of fashion? Do we trick you out, now this
 Now that way; with a stiffened robe to-day,
 To-morrow with a garment limp as nets
 Yon careless fisher-boy drags through the brine?
 A simile that holds in more than that;
 For all your garments are but meshes fine
 To catch unwary——'

'Fishes? They're cunning, too;
 But over busy in their own high way.
 The sun that breaks upon their glittering scales
 Perchance may dazzle them. For our poor robes,
 Most women that I know make sweet appeal
 Unto the lords who rule them in their homes.
 The answer is: "Still wear what others wear;
 Make not yourself a mock for gaping eyes."
 This "do as others do," so lightly said,
 'Tis this which mars us all. It seems to me
 Women are less like flocks of sheep than men.'

'You're complimentary.'

'I'm true, I hope:
 That truth is sharp, pray lay not to my charge.'

'Would you could all be true in higher things!'

'Why, there again, you cavil without cause.
 Give us the chance: then see what we may be.'

'Of course; permit you to go lecturing forth
To grinning students.'

'Not so; lecture us'
The rather. Give us of your wealth of mind:
Teach us in gentleness, and we will learn,
And bless the hand that led us gently up
The weary steep we cannot climb alone.'

'You're gentle now. You have as many moods
As yonder deep. Mark how it surges up,
Then breaks in foam-wreaths on the enamoured shore
That draws it, sparkling, to his wide embrace!
The very sands seem all a-glow with life!
The changefulness of ocean—is't not sweet?'

'Sweet as the constant face of heaven, that looks
Upon the sea, as mother on her child,
And, seeing her own image in its face,
Feels keenly it is hers. See! bending, breaks
The sky in smiles the sea gives back again.
Mark where the clouds glide floating far away,
Like angry passions from a child's first kiss!'

'You're fond of children?'

'Yes; but knew it not
Till I knew Laura. Do you love them too?'
Not I——Yes, Laura; just as I should love
A little sister, had I one.'

'You are——'

'Alone in all this bitter, biting world.'

'Not now—not now! Not since you came to us.
I think that Laura loves you; for I note
That while the child plays busy on the shore,
And gives her idle brother tasks to do,
She often lifts her face to where you brood,
So sorrowfully musing. When you chance
To smile upon her, she breaks out in smiles,
As though a dearer brother were in you
Than nature gave her in the youth you teach
To be the pride and honour of his house.'

'That is no sign of love. You do as much
Yourself, who hate me and my bearish ways.
If I but laugh, you catch the simple trick
Of giving back my mood. A lunatic
Is treated thus, one dare not differ from
Lest he should seize us in his sudden arms
And leap with us a crag into the sea!
If I am black in melancholy, then
You grow as miserably like myself
As my twin-spirit. 'Tis a sign of hate.'

'Most grieved am I that so you should mistake
An honest wish to see you more at ease.
If I knew how——'

'Then smile when I am sad.'

'I cannot.'

'When I am in merry mood,
I pray you look a little sullen on me.'

'I cannot, for my life! Your smiles infect
The happy world about you. Dancing lights
Play all about the flowers, till they stir
Their petals and grow winged with innocent joy.
The airy scope of nature makes the most
Of that most seldom gladness, as the skies
Bend to a bow of beauty after storm.'

'I shall be better hence. I will go back,—
Not to my home; I have none: back to college,
And take a fellowship in place of wife.'

'A wife, though but a shrew, would help you most.
Hard men have done their best to harden you.'

'Am I so hard?'

'Hard to yourself, I mean.'

'Not hard to you?'

'I think not of myself:
I, too, am used to cuffs and buffetings—
Or was, at least, until I sheltered here.
All love me here—'

'Including Reginald?'

'I hope to make him friend to me, as well
As his young sister and the good Sir John.'

'And nothing more?'

'I understand you not.'

'I may seem rude; but—might it not be well
To cultivate a softer feeling still?
A baronet is not amiss, though poor.'

'I should be angry. Yet I can but smile
To think in all this time how little way
I must have made in your esteem. Were there
But one man in the world, and marriage meant
For me, love, safety, honour, and—a home,
I could not owe them to my master's son.
Whose heart so noble to believe me true
Both to myself and him? What though I loved
Him, as I could love some far other man
I ne'er have seen—perchance may never see—
What warrant could I give that all my love
Were not a show—a bribe—to win a place
Was never meant for me? What! steal a son?
A poor return for such a warm regard
As makes me here a house-child in his home.'

'You, then, could like him well, if things were other?'

'He seems a youth of promise most in that
Which savours of your teaching; is well learned,
But somewhat cold, I think. He does not love

His sister Laura as she should be loved.
Impatient is he ever when the child
Entreats him to some pastime at her hand—
You never do so—never!

‘True; I like
The child: one must love something——’

‘Good or bad,
It not much matters which. All the great joy
Of love is in the giving——’

‘There you miss
The truth! All *my* love given is nothing;—less:
I must have *your* love—have it now—have all,
Given up to me in bond to have and hold!
Give—give it me! Nay, do not rise, in doubt
If I am sane or mad. Your love I’ll have,
Ay, though I die for it!’

‘A merry jest.
I fain would smile at it.’

‘It is *no* jest;
‘Tis fateful, fearful earnest. I’ll have love—
Your love—its full assurance, given as free
As the free winds that kiss that rosing cheek
Which sets my wild heart throbbing with a hope.
Tell me it is the rose-hue of the west
That comes to say my life’s sun is not dead
Though night and darkness draw upon the world!
Before I slip my secret to the winds
That round you cannot blow and hold deceit,
Answer me—here at once—with all your soul,
My Marian, do you love me?’

‘Hold, a little;
My eyes are dim. You’re sudden. I am weak.
Is it the sun between the tamarisk boughs—
Or see I but the waving of the stems.
A bird seems fluttering in my breast. My heart
Beats as it never beat—will ne’er beat more
If now you should forsake me.’

‘Call me yours,
And trust your sweet head on my guardian breast.’

My friend—nay more—my love, for life—for death,
And oh, beyond—for ever and for ever!’

‘Your Reginald.’

‘My Reginald?’

‘Your own;
The son of good Sir John. Pardon the plot—
Pardon, for love’s sweet sake!’

‘It was not well.’

‘It was most shameful—hateful. I could curse
Myself for putting such a cheat on you.
Yet, this believe: whatever be my sin

A Strange Courtship.

In changing places thus with yonder dolt,
'Twas less my scheme than my good father's plan
To bind you to us, spite of your sweet self.'

'I see it all. You did it but to make
My heart and conscience light. My pardon, then;
As full as I can speak it. Nay, my cheek—
Well,—take it from my lips, then: they are yours.'

ELEANORA L. HERVEY.



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MY ESCAPE FROM HYDROPATHY;

or, ~~What Cold Water did for me.~~



WHEN our troubles are such as we could by no means have averted or avoided, kind friends sometimes feel for us; but when we suffer for our own folly we have

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little right to seek, and still less to expect, much sympathy. The writer of the few following pages accordingly looks not for one word of pity, not a sympathizing thought from

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those who read them, for he freely admits his to have been the latter case, he having deliberately submitted to the scourge that chastised him so severely.

By no means out of health, yet overdone with study some few years back, I resolved to put my books away, and to combine a little change of scene with a short but thorough holiday. The question was, Whither should I betake myself? It was the depth of winter; the very season when of all others there is no place like home. The seaside would be dreary. For amusement there would of course be nothing like London; but then I wanted freshening, and I had my doubts whether the atmosphere of town was the best for that purpose. I was a town bird myself, and had a notion that country air would be the thing for me; but just fancy a lodging in a retired village, or at a farm-house in a meadow, at such a time of year!

In the midst of my difficulty a friend called.

'I have it,' said he. 'Have you ever been to —?'

'No, I have not,' was my reply; 'but that is a cold-water establishment, is it not?'

'Oh, never you mind that. You are not obliged to become a patient unless you like. I go there sometimes when I want a change, simply as a visitor, and am taken in on *pension*. It is a capital place. The situation is most healthy. You face plainly but well, and the house is generally full in winter. Take my advice and try it, for it offers exactly what you want—country air without the attendant drawbacks which you so much dread.'

I needed no more urging. I thanked my friend for his suggestion, and before I was twenty-four hours older I had packed up my portmanteau and was on my way to —.

One always forms beforehand one's notions of people and of places—generally how erroneous are they! All the journey through I had been picturing — to myself, and of course when I reached the spot I found my preconceived notions, as

usual, quite unlike the reality; and I confess I felt most agreeably disappointed as I drove through the well-kept grounds up to the door of the establishment.

No dismal infirmiry-looking building was this, but a handsome and imposing mansion which many a nobleman might be pardoned coveting. I alighted, and as I entered the spacious hall received a hearty welcome from the hydropathic host, who concluded his salutations by expressing his conviction that a few weeks of the treatment would remove the symptoms from which I was suffering. This was probably a cut-and-dried speech wherewith every fresh patient was greeted, by way of inspiring confidence; but having no wish to be regarded as an invalid, or 'treated' with cold water, I deemed it well to set the worthy doctor right at once, and told him I thought he must have mistaken me for some one else, as I had come merely as a visitor, and should not trouble him at present to prescribe for me.

'Oh, I beg your pardon,' replied he, 'you are Mr. —, who wrote to me from —; I remember now all about it. How is Mr. —?' alluding to my friend who had recommended my coming to the place.

Having been shown my room upstairs, a plainly but comfortably-furnished one, the window of which commanded a view which in summer must have been exquisite, I was taken and introduced as the last arrival to the inmates of the establishment.

The patients numbered between thirty and forty, of both sexes, of divers and of doubtful ages, for the most part bachelors and single ladies. Of these some were invalids and no mistake, but others looked quite hale and hearty. I learned, however, that all were undergoing the treatment, so that I should be the solitary looker-on. The prevailing topic of conversation was 'the treatment,' which was expatiated upon well-nigh incessantly and with more or less enthusiasm, according to the degree of benefit derived. There were some who,

having pursued other systems without avail, had wound up here as a *dernier ressort*. They had tried allopathy and homoeopathy, and I know not what other pathy, and now hydropathy was taking its turn—expected to accomplish the uphill work of undoing all the mischief which preceding systems had effected. And one or two had already tried hydropathy elsewhere. Past experience had, it is true, not been very encouraging, but then they had heard there was a special virtue in the water of —, and Dr. — was such a clever man! So judicious too! He knew exactly how to suit his treatment to the strength of his patients. They never felt so hopeful of recovery as they did now; they only regretted not having come to — sooner.

With scarcely an exception, all spoke in a similar strain, a feeling of unbounded confidence in the system they were at that moment pursuing pervading the party. To me, who never had been initiated into the mysteries or the technicalities of hydropathy, the whole process seemed unintelligible, and as I sat and listened to the patients descanting on the merits and effects peculiar to the 'douche,' and the 'lamp,' and the 'packing,' I fairly wondered what it all could mean. I know not whether I felt the more amazed or amused at the learned and elaborate disquisitions upon pathology, which some of these amateurs in physis entered into; and certainly, to judge from the familiarity with which medical terms were quoted, and the readiness wherewith the anatomical vocabulary was appealed to, one might have supposed some even of the gentler portion of the company had had the advantage of promenading it at Guy's. In fact, I learnt more about cutaneous action and reaction, about circulation and respiration, congestion and digestion, from simply listening to what passed than I had ever succeeded in taking in during my whole life before. I made no secret of my ignorance, for which no doubt I was much commiserated, especially by one of the patients, a matronly lady who kindly

undertook to make me for the moment her pupil.

'You see, sir,' she began, 'the great advantage of the hydropathic treatment is that it assists nature.'

'Indeed, ma'am. I presume when nature needs assistance?'

'Precisely. There is in nature a great principle which physicians of the old school failed to recognise, the principle of self-restoration. By that is meant the tendency in nature to labour for its own cure, and that is what hydropathy seeks, and seeks so successfully to encourage and develop.'

'I have heard of that property of nature before which you refer to, and I do so thoroughly believe in it that I am convinced we should often do much better did we leave her alone to work a cure for herself.'

'Sometimes, I grant, that may be so; but suppose nature labouring to a disadvantage with enfeebled organs, it may be unable to develop those symptoms which are, in fact, the safety-valves for the escape of disease.'

'I dare say I am very stupid, but it seems to me, in the absence of symptoms, we ought not to concern ourselves about disease.'

'You do not understand me quite. Suppose there to be indications of a disposition on the part of nature to expel disease through the cuticle, but only partially succeeding, do you not think we should take a hint, and seek to develop her external action to the full?'

I began to fear my learned instructress was getting far beyond me; however, I replied, 'Perhaps so.'

'And in case nature should be unwilling so to act at all, to originate such action?'

'Well, I am not so sure about that. I think we are going a little too fast when we set about originating symptoms and suggesting to Dame Nature a course which may be far from her purpose.'

'So many, like yourself, have thought, but the results in multitudes of cases have proved the correctness of the theory, and one, I may say, the chief aim of hydropathy is to encourage such action—'

mainly external, as will tend to expel disease.'

'I should be afraid of it.'

'Oh, there is nothing to fear in it. It is the safest of all systems; and most interesting is it to watch its working either in one's own case or in others', from the commencement of its operation to the effecting of its crisis.'

'I beg your pardon, I did not quite catch that word.'

'A crisis, sir; a crisis.'

'Then matters come to a crisis, do they? Of what nature is that crisis, may I ask?'

'Why, it varies. Sometimes it manifests itself in an acute attack of the patient's present complaint, or one of some former period, which, it was supposed, had disappeared long ago; sometimes in violent sickness; frequently in a cutaneous eruption which lasts for several days, and occasionally a mild form of insanity will appear; but, indeed, there is no determining beforehand what form the crisis may assume.'

'What a dreadful state of apprehension the patient must be in while anticipating any such seizures! May I ask, do all pass through this crisis?'

'No, by no means all; but the most successful cases experience it. Now, I am expecting to pass through this stage, I may say, daily, and I do hope I shall not be disappointed. I have been quite longing for an attack of some sort or other to convince me of the effective working of the cure in my case.'

'And why is this termed a crisis?'

'Because it is the critical stage of the treatment. It is the turning-point in the complaint, which is so much to be desired.'

'But the complaint might happen afterwards to take a turn the wrong way. What a sad consummation that would be! Has such a thing ever been known?'

'Whether such a result as you suggest has ever been known, I cannot tell you; but soon after the appearance of the crisis, the treatment is generally at an end, and the patient quits the establishment.'

'I should say it was then quite time.'

'I perceive you are very sceptical, but I don't despair of seeing you yet a convert before leaving us, and perhaps submitting to the treatment.'

'No, I think not. The prospect of some terrible crisis, such as you have described, would of itself deter me from meddling with hydropathy.'

'Pray don't allow anything I have said to alarm you. Perhaps I have unduly represented the formidable nature of the crisis. It is by no means such a dreadful thing. Now that gentleman there (pointing to one of the patients on a sofa close by) has just passed through it, and is going home to-morrow.'

It may be well to state here that the individual referred to was the picture of an invalid. His body was so thin that his clothes seemed to hang upon him. His face was fearfully covered with blotches, as though he had recently recovered from the small-pox. What skin there was was deadly pale. Altogether his aspect was truly deplorable.

'He looks dreadfully ill, poor fellow,' I remarked.

'Do you think so? Why, that is one of our show cases. Hydropathy has done wonders for that gentleman. I cannot tell you what a change it has effected in him. When he first came here he was quite of a corpulent habit. His cheeks were unnaturally full and high-coloured, and it was plain his was a case needing strong treatment. Dr. — said he would soon alter all that, only give him time. And sure enough, after praiseworthy perseverance for two months, the welcome crisis supervened. He awoke up one morning covered with an infinity of boils. For a fortnight or so he suffered grievously, finding ease in no position. But he is now getting rid of this inconvenience, and fast regaining his health. I am sure Dr. — deserves great credit for the case, having wrought such a change in him that his friends will scarcely recognise him.'

'That I can quite believe. At the same time, I must tell you he is about the last person I should have thought of styling a show-patient; and for my part, were I so disfigured,

I would go and hide myself somewhere till I had regained some of my good looks. Why, the man will prove an antidote to hydropathy wherever he exhibits himself.'

I was fortunate in witnessing this case, for, as it happened, no similar one occurred, nor did any crisis transpire, while I was at the establishment, at least, none came to my knowledge; but I was told such effects were by no means uncommon, and the simple view which I, as a plain man, would have taken of such a condition was, that by dint of constant external and internal application of water, the blood of the sufferer had become so thoroughly impoverished or diluted, that results had followed exactly similar to those that arise from a long course of poor or insufficient diet.

To do them justice, the patients appeared to go through the system in right earnest. All seemed to persist in it with a zeal worthy of the best of causes. I detected no evasion of the discipline, or departure from the prescribed *regimen*. The stated number of baths, and the specified number of libations to be taken in the day, were rigidly adhered to, in spite of any amount of inconvenience or disinclination.

The hours of the establishment were early. The place was all astir at six o'clock, soon after which hour nearly all the inmates took their first bath, and vain was it for any light sleeper like myself to court slumber after business had begun. I could hear my neighbours overhead, or alongside of me, hard at their elaborate aquatic exercises every morning. The same routine of sounds was gone through day after day. First would come the pouring and splashing of water into the various tin reservoirs, then a slight pause, and one heard the unmistakable plunge in of the patient, not unfrequently accompanied by a faint yell on encountering the first shock of the cold element; then came a distinct thud upon the floor, the patient was out again; and lastly, you heard the voices of patients and attendants in conversation while the former were being rubbed down by the latter. The

process of dressing being completed, a walk of half an hour or so was the next thing, unless the elements positively forbade such a proceeding; so an interval would succeed, during which the house was empty and quiet until the clock struck eight, when the patients rallied to the breakfast room.

A walk before breakfast in the depth of winter is a cheerless thing, especially when that meal is at eight, and the sun does not rise much before that hour. Still, although some mornings it was almost dark, even ladies turned out to take their early airing in the gloom, and snatch, it was hoped, the pearl of health from Nature while she lay but half awake. The result, however, of this preface to the day was beyond all question: it made itself evident at the breakfast table in the unmistakable avidity—not to use a stronger word—where-with all met their meal whose appetites had had the benefit of ventilation. The fare was plain, but good. You had the choice of two beverages—tea or cocoa, coffee being a forbidden thing; choice of two breads also—white or brown—both of yesterday's baking, if not the day's before; you might, besides, have cold meat or eggs; both if you liked, for there was, as far as I could see, no restriction laid upon the patients as to the amount to be taken in. The facility with which the well-covered table was relieved of its morning burden fairly amazed me; and as I found my own power of appropriation sadly inferior to that of my fellow-breakfasters, I confess I longed to pick up somewhat of this hydrophobic hunger.

How is it? thought I; these folks are invalids, while I am supposed to be in health; still they can eat a hearty meal at eight o'clock, and I can't!

Truth to tell, I felt envious of their appetite; my feelings probably resembling those of a young lady in a ball-room who, having never learnt to dance, is fain to be content with looking on at her companions while they trip it on the light fantastic toe.

So far all was very well. Thus much of the system was highly be-

nesficial. There are very few, I feel convinced, who would not find themselves great gainers in the way of health if they would but take to early rising and a regular cold bath all through the year, not omitting the sequel of a quick walk in the fresh air till breakfast time. We should have fewer complaints of seediness in the morning if this practice were more generally resorted to; and many who suffer from dyspepsia might, I believe, thus wash off the first half of it in their dressing-room, and blow away the other half outside. But, as it is, some dine late, others sup late; bed is, for the most part, not forsaken till the last moment; there is an effort to cram the toilet into the smallest possible space of time, and folks hurry to the breakfast room fresh from the land of dreams, though anything but fresh as regards physical and digestive energies; then they wonder that they are not hungry for their morning meal. Where is the wonder? The stomach is probably still contemplating the tribute of the night before, and is not just yet looking for another windfall. Perhaps, like its owner, it, too, has been napping in the night, and has left its work to stand over till next morning; and scarcely is it cause for astonishment if there is an indisposition to take in another job while there is still a heavy one on hand. Too much can hardly, then, be said in praise of that portion of the hydropathic code which knocks such habits on the head; and though I was a sufferer, as will presently be seen, from the cold water treatment generally, I will not utter a syllable in disparagement of the free-breakfast part of the system.

Amongst the patients I found two or three of a congenial spirit, with whom I fraternised extensively, especially one, a captain, but just come home from the Crimea, and who, in addition to his medals, had brought away a more effectual, though less welcome, memento of his campaigning in the shape of chronic rheumatism, for which he had hitherto vainly sought a remedy. With this exception he enjoyed per-

fect health, and when free from pain could take his ten or twelve miles walk as well as any man. I saw a good deal of him, and was never tired of listening to his Crimean anecdotes; but we chatted on other subjects besides the Russian war, and I think our conversation generally drifted into a discussion of the hydropathic system.

'Have you been long at the establishment?' I one day asked him, at the beginning of our acquaintance.

'I have nearly spent a month here. I came, I think, the second week in December.'

'And what do you think of the treatment? Are you deriving any benefit from it?'

'Well, my general health is certainly improved; not that I was much amiss before; but in a general way I feel invigorated. As regards my rheumatism, however, which was the cause of my coming here, I must confess to feeling somewhat of disappointment. Perhaps my attacks of pain are not quite so frequent as they used to be; but when the pains do come on, they are every bit as violent as they were before. But how do you like the place? you are not under the treatment, are you?'

'No, I am not undergoing the water-cure, as I scarcely felt sufficiently out of sorts to warrant my subjecting myself to it. I am, however, participating so far in the system that I rise and take my cold bath two hours earlier than I am in the habit of doing. I am also trying the experiment of a walk before breakfast, which is quite a novelty to me.'

'What a pity to stop there! Take my advice, and go in for a course of the treatment. Ask the doctor to prescribe for you as he has done for me, and I am sure it will do you good.'

'No; I think not, at present. I shall content myself with the change of air, and of hours, and of diet, and see what that will do for me. There is one thing I miss here dreadfully, and that is a glass of wine or a drop of beer; something better than water during dinner.'

'Ah! I felt just the same. For some days I was very good, and tried hard to gulp down the cold water, but it was no go, my stomach wouldn't stand it, so I gave it up, and have since consoled myself with a substitute upstairs.'

'How do you manage that?'

'Oh, very simply. I never leave home, that is to say, without a travelling-companion in the shape of a portable canteen. It looks like a large dressing-case, but it is capable of carrying half a dozen bottles of wine. On coming down here I brought my companion with me; and really it is a most fortunate thing I did so, for without a little stimulant I find I cannot get on.'

'But does not drinking wine rather interfere with the treatment? I have always heard that it does.'

'Quite a mistake, I assure you, quite a mistake. The fact is, under hydropathy you need stimulants more than at any other time, for it has a lowering tendency. The doctor, deluded man, supposes I drink water; but, should he cure me, I intend to tell him that I have had a glass or two of wine every day.'

'Would he be much annoyed if he knew it?'

'Oh, I expect he would drop on to me pretty sharply. He would say I had been deceiving him, and we should probably have a scene. I wish to avoid this; so when he reminds me to drink water at intervals during the day, I say nothing, but mentally I label his decanters "For external application only."'

'You amuse me with your dodging of the doctor; but, I suppose, in other matters you conform?'

'Yes, rigidly. I take my three baths daily; and though I brought a lot of medicine with me, I flung it all away, for fear I should be tempted to violate the rule that prohibits everything but hydropathic remedies.'

'And are you one of the anxious expectants of a crisis, may I ask?'

'Not I. Mine, the doctor tells me, is no case for crisis. The fact is, such things only come on when the blood is in a very bad state, or there is a malignant disease of some sort in the constitution. But tell me,

what have you heard about the crisis?'

'Oh! enough to terrify me from having anything to do with hydropathy.'

'What nonsense! And has that been the only thing to hinder you from trying it? You may depend on it you would never have experienced a crisis, unless, indeed, there is far more the matter with you than I take there to be. But you have never told me what brought you to this place.'

'Why, you see, I read and write a good deal, which confines me mostly to the house. I have led a sedentary life for some time now without a break; but latterly I began to feel I must shut up. I could not sleep at nights, and my appetite fell off completely; so I came off here for change and perfect rest.'

'Is that all? Why, yours is the very case to be benefited by the treatment. Do be prevailed upon to try it. You'll lay in a stock of health, and go home a new man.'

Thus my friend resumed his pleading for hydropathy. Much more passed upon the subject, he arguing strongly in its favour, and endeavouring to dissipate my prejudices, and I stoutly resisting his entreaties that I should give it a trial, till at length—will it be credited?—I gave in. In an evil moment I was persuaded to vote myself a patient, and go before the doctor next morning.

Dr. — had a stated time for seeing patients after nine o'clock. At the stated hour in I turned to the consultation-room. A victim had that moment come away. The doctor motioned me to the chair but just vacated—a chair in which some hundreds, probably, had sat before me—a chair which, could it but have spoken, might have related many a sad case of suffering. Some droll tales, too, it might have told, it may be, for no doubt hypochondriacs had sat there also. Into that same chair I dropped, the doctor assuming his regular consultation look—all gravity and mute attention—while I explained my case.

'Doctor,' said I, 'I am going to

try a course of your treatment after all.'

'I think you are very wise. Have you anything particular that wants attending to? Anything about the system not working well? Is your general health good?'

'Well, I don't think there is much wrong with me; but I am anxious to give hydropathy a trial, because they tell me it benefits the healthy and the strong as well as invalids.'

'So, unquestionably, it does. But would you just let me feel your pulse, and look at your tongue, for we doctors frequently discover indications of morbid action when all is supposed to be going on well. Indeed it was only yesterday I detected symptoms of a latent disorder in a gentleman who quite ridiculed the notion of being out of health—an affection which was insidiously undermining his constitution, and which, had it been neglected, must ultimately have assumed a fatal form.'

I own I did not quite like this style of talk. The thought of being preyed upon by some concealed disease which you do not feel is disagreeable. I, too, might possibly be the victim of some hidden malady, to be discovered there and then. I made no answer, but just held my tongue in check till his was quiet, when out I shot it to its utmost length. I know not what he saw thereon, or what he gathered from my throbbing vein; but he answered with a physician's 'Hum!' and asked me if my appetite was good. I admitted that it was at fault.

'I am not surprised,' said he, 'to hear it. I should have been surprised had it been otherwise. Your digestion is evidently out of order. Hence, too, the bad nights which you complain of. Your pulse is full and sluggish; you are suffering from —' Here, inspired man, he went into an elaborate diagnosis of my case, letting loose a complete storm of medical jargon, placing me, as it were, under his verbal shower-bath while he pulled the string, and soused me with a torrent of physiological technicalities from which I

at length emerged very little the wiser for the infliction. 'But,' added he, 'I am happy to tell you, I can discover no trace of anything like organic disease about you.'

This was consoling, and the relief to me was great. For to one like myself, unversed in medical phraseology, it seemed as if something awful must result from such a combination of verbal prodigies; and how it came to pass—unless on the principle that one ailment combats another—that so formidable a train of anatomical mechanism could all be out of order and yet produce, I may say, nothing, will remain a mystery with me to the end.

'Well, doctor, what do you recommend me to do?' said I, anxious to come to something practical.

'I am writing some instructions for you. Here they are. Hang them up on a hook you will see over your bed-room mantelpiece. In the morning, first thing, take a glass of water—two if you like—then a tepid bath, the temperature to be gradually reduced till quite cold. Then walk till breakfast-time. Another half-pint of water towards eleven o'clock, followed by a lamp-bath and another walk. Take about a pint at four o'clock and a sitz-bath after it. Let the cold water be applied to the back of the neck and allowed to trickle down the spine. Mind, a walk after every bath. Keep that up till I see you again in a few days' time. I shall soon cure you.'

I departed with my watery prescription, prepared to carry it out to the very letter. I confess I dreaded those unpalatable draughts, but they should go down with all their tastelessness, and not even my friend the captain should induce me to omit them, or touch a drop of something stronger. An attendant, one Jack Smart, was selected to put me through my hydropathic drill. He was a capital fellow in his way, who had not spent three years at the establishment in vain. He knew all about the treatment, and has probably, by this time, set up on his own account. Of the two, I preferred Jack infinitely to his master, because he did not seek to

mystify me with scientific bosh. His distortions of his master's terms were sometimes most amusing. He had a patient in the room below, he informed me, a source of much anxiety to him; and almost daily was I wicked enough to inquire what it was that ailed the gentleman in order to elicit the same descriptive answer—'Conjecture of the liver, sir, conjecture of the liver.' His notions of the action of water on the human frame were, to himself, quite satisfactory, whilst to me they were as unanswerable as they were entertaining.

'I hope, sir, you drink plenty of water,' said he one day, while rubbing me down.

'Why, Smart?' said I.

'Because, sir, you needs it on account of all this here perspiration. That's how 'tis, sir, as many of our patients don't derive no good. The bath drains off, like, what you drinks in. But if so be as you takes the bath only, and don't take in liquid accordin', why, don't you see, sir, 'tis just like workin' the pump when there aint no water in the well; and that's it as does the mischief to the constitution. But by keepin' up a good supply inside, and workin' it out continually through the pores of the skin, there's a constant flowin' always kept a goin' as draws off all them things the master calls the acrid rumours.'

Far were it from me to dispute this admirable theory. Why should I, with no better to replace it by? He had others in abundance, equally conclusive and amusing, to which, by dint of strong effort, I was generally a smileless listener.

But few will care to study Smart upon hydropathy; so on I pass, to specify a sample or two of the processes to which I was subjected. And of all the inventions for bringing a man down commend me to the lamp-bath. This, it will be borne in mind, was to constitute my midday operation. Accordingly, at the hour named, acting under Jack Smart's guidance, I proceeded to unrobe. A kitchen chair—one with a wooden seat—was ready to receive me. I sat therein in wonderment at what was coming but as I be-

held my attendant deliberately place a light upon the floor beneath me, I was just as well content that there was something denser than cane wicker-work between me and the flame. No sooner was I seated than my hydropathic valet wrapped a blanket round my quivering frame, inclosing chair and light as he folded it around me. He then applied a second in like manner, and a third, taking care to leave no aperture by which the cold air from without might gain access to the heated air within. There I sat, enveloped to the chin, my head alone emerging, Sphinx-like, at the vertex of the woollen pyramid. I never before knew how simple a thing it is to get warm, nay hot, in the coldest winter's day; but soon I made the discovery that none need shiver long who can command a blanket or two, a farthing rush-light, and a wooden chair.

I may have sat some fifteen minutes, to me it seemed much more, when I was led to feel that all below my chin was gradually being baked. At first the warmth was pleasant, and I was led to think the lamp-bath not a bad thing, after all; but the temperature rose, and rapidly became oppressive. Moisture oozed from every pore, then it literally flowed, fumes of thick hot vapour forced a passage through the blankets, enveloping me in a cloud of steam. I felt I could not stand it any longer, and appealed to Smart to set me free. He urged me to submit a little longer, but I said, 'No, not another moment.' He said the bath was just beginning to work beautifully; that I should spoil its operation if I stopped just then. I replied, 'I didn't care. Take off these blankets instantly, or I will rise and fling them from me.'

A slight movement on my part convinced the man I was in earnest, so he reluctantly complied. A word or two of something like respectful remonstrance at my impatience escaped my well-meaning attendant as he proceeded rapidly to uncover me, bidding me at the same time to lose not an instant on emerging from my wrapping, but to plunge forthwith into a cold bath that

awaited me in the corner. Quick as thought I did so. Dripping and smoking as I was, I hurriedly lay down in the cold water regardless of all preconceived notions of the risk of checking perspiration and so forth. But how refreshing was that plunge! How delicious the sensation of that instantaneous chill! My sufferings while under distillation were all forgotten in the luxury of that momentary dip. Nay, the relief was so delightful that it more than compensated for all my basking in the chair, and I resolved to go through the ordeal more patiently next time. But little more than a second was allowed me—two at the very outside; Jack Smart was waiting with a rough bathing sheet, into which he summoned me without delay. And then he set to rubbing me. What a famous rubber that man was! Had I been a horse, what a coat he would have given me! He seemed to throw his whole strength into this part of the operation. As he rubbed he pressed, or rather leant, against me; while I, like John Gilpin's horse, 'who never in that sort had handled been before,' had hard work to hold my ground against the onsets of my assailant; till at length, beginning himself to pant under the effort, he told me he thought that would do, and I might re-attire. So ended the lamp-bath, an appliance of which I had heard the patients talk so much, and of which hitherto I knew so little. The whole process usually lasted about three-quarters of an hour, a period of physical excitement, and one in which not a little was effected. The result of a series of such baths, so lowering, so exhausting to the frame, must be obvious to the most ordinary thinker. Two or three may be taken with impunity, though I have known a strong man swoon away under the third; but there are very few indeed who can bear to have their strength day after day thus distilled out of them without giving way before such treatment. So with myself. After my first lamp-bath, I felt much refreshed. It seemed to me I had been relieved of a weight; I felt lighter every-

where. In place of losing strength, I felt myself altogether more elastic, and my sensations generally were so satisfactory, that I became enthusiastic in praise of the bath in question. After, however, my third, I think it was, I imagined I had grown weaker. I rose from my seat anything but renovated; and after coming out of the cold water, I felt more inclined to go to bed than to take exercise. I tried hard to persuade myself 'twas fancy. I thought to walk it off, but it wouldn't do; the walk I used to take with ease now knocked me up, and I was fain to be satisfied with half the distance. I told the doctor I was losing strength. He did not say at once the lamp-bath had done it, but tacitly he recognised the fact, for he bade me suspend them for the present. I was to continue the morning and evening bath 'as before,' but at midday my attendant was to 'pack' me until further orders. I ought here to mention, in justice to the system, that the only points in which there was a symptom of falling off were muscular energy and superfluous flesh. Some, perhaps, will think these quite sufficient to awaken apprehension; but in other respects there was improvement. I slept like a top. My digestion had mended, for my appetite approached the ravenous. I sat down feeling what I had so eagerly longed to feel—hungry for breakfast, and my performance at the table did high credit to the treatment. My fellow-patients affirmed they perceived improvement in my looks—my complexion was clearer, said they. It may have been so. Nevertheless, I was weaker. 'You will soon regain your strength' was the consoling assurance I met with on all sides. I hoped I should.

I have abstained from encroaching on the patience of the reader with a wearisome description of the sitz-bath, for there is really nothing in it to describe, but perhaps I ought to say a word or two on 'packing,' for the term is by no means self-explanatory.

My first essay in this damp diver-

sion I shall bear in mind for some time to come, having, through the carelessness of my attendant, had a slight mishap while undergoing it, which has served to impress it rather vividly upon my memory. Unhappily for me, my regular bath man was absent for the day, and I was handed over to the tender mercies of another of the fraternity, who proved but a sorry substitute for the efficient Jack Smart. I perceived this before the fellow had been five minutes in the room with me. He was dull and unenergetic—two faults fatal in a hydropathic attendant. At his bidding, however, I undressed and turned in between the blankets, while he was slowly wringing out a sheet in the big bath already referred to. I was to be packed in that sheet. I awaited the man with an instinctive shudder; and what a shock it gave me when my flesh first came in contact with the cold wet linen! What misery did I endure whilst being plastered with the icy shroud! How horribly it held me in its clammy folds! Over and over was I rolled, while the attendant coiled the chilly wrapper round my quivering frame. Arms and all went in, everything except my head being bound up or packed inside the sheet. In short, I was literally bandaged like a mummy, and lay as helpless on my back as any Egyptian specimen. Then, as in the case of the lamp-bath, came blankets in profusion, not merely laid upon me, but tucked well in at the sides, depriving me still more of any motive power. And now the 'packing' process was complete. As far as I can remember, twenty minutes was the time prescribed by the doctor for remaining in a state of 'pack;' so I ordered the man to hang my watch up by me, and then bade him leave me to my thoughts, telling him to be sure and make his reappearance in a quarter of an hour's time. I heard the door shut, I knew I was alone and powerless to raise a finger; but it was winter time, and so I congratulated myself that there was no fear of a great settling on my nose. The shiver which I felt at first subsided very quickly,

the sheet soon acquiring the heat of the enveloped animal, and in less than ten minutes' time I was letting off steam like a boiled roly-poly. There I lay puffing on my back, oppressed with the superincumbent weight of bedclothes, longing for my liberation. What wretchedness it was! The lamp-bath, thought I, was bad enough, but packing beats it into fits. Whatever I endure, here I must lie and bear it. How eagerly I watched the hands of my chronometer! What a comfort to feel that five minutes more would see me out of misery! But how was this? It was past the quarter, and the man had not come back. I'll wait till the time is up before I call; he is sure to be outside the door. I kept my eye upon the minute hand as it sluggishly approached the longed-for point upon the dial. At last it reached it—the time was up. 'Hallo there!' shouted I; 'come in—the time's up.' But it was like shouting to the winds, the fellow was out of hearing. I shouted louder, in the hope that, though he heard me not, some one else would, to whom I might communicate my plight; but, though I fancied I heard sounds in the adjoining room, no one seemed to hear my bawling. I had better lie still and submit patiently to my fate. No, I could not. The feeling of restraint alone had grown insupportable, to say nothing of the stifling heat which was increasing with every effort I made. I never knew what desperation was till then. Five-and-twenty minutes had I lain thus tied and bound, and motionless, fixed in a position which seemed hopelessly unchangeable.

Describe my feelings I cannot, but I remember self-reproach and rage entered largely into them. What a fool I was ever to have let the fellow go! Was he coming back at all, or should I have to wait till night to be released from this state of thralldom? I felt I should be dead by then. I was getting excited. I thought I could not breathe. How I escaped an apoplectic fit I know not. How I struggled to get loose! But my struggles were not wholly ineffec-

tual. I found I could bend my elbows sufficiently to rest upon them; that by a violent effort I could draw myself up it might be an inch. This was a grand discovery. I persevered in the effort, delighted to find I was slowly worming my way out of my cocoon of bedclothes, till, by dint of straining and forcing, out I fell upon the floor, head foremost, completely exhausted with my exertions. I suppose I made considerable noise in falling, for an attendant who happened to be passing, judging there was something wrong, tapped and came in. Poor man—he appeared much concerned at seeing me, and when he learned the nature of my mishap, he seemed to share in some degree the indignation which I felt with Smart's stupid deputy. It turned out, as I suspected, that the good-for-nothing fellow, who had other patients to attend to, had forgotten all about me, his ill-fated supernumerary.

Most richly would he have deserved his congé, and his master was for turning him adrift the moment he heard of his negligence, but I interceded for him, pleading extenuating circumstances, and so the man was kept on, to perpetuate, it may be, similar acts of forgetfulness upon subsequent victims.

The recital of my misfortune elicited much merriment from the patients, who thought it a capital joke, at the same time one which they appeared to prefer avoiding, resolutions being taken there and then not to give an attendant leave of absence whilst lying in the helplessness of 'pack.' I need hardly say I subscribed heartily to that resolution, and in after packings, of which I underwent a few, I kept my man in the room with me till the operation was quite concluded. I had now persisted in the treatment for some weeks, being in turn subjected to most, if not all, of the divers hydropathic appliances in vogue at the establishment. With the exception of that awful thing, the douche, those to which I have referred were probably amongst the most effective, and told most upon the frame. At least, so I found them. I was manifestly losing flesh,

and that fast. Had my loss been computed by the pound I feel assured it would have shocked me. These pounds had mostly, I suppose, gone off in vapour, though no doubt something should be put down to Jack Smart's rubbing. But it mattered little how they had vanished, the fact was beyond question. To this my clothes bore witness. It was clear they had been made to fit a bigger man than my present self. When I first came to the place my garments were in close contact with my person, but now my person was retreating from them inwardly, leaving a chilly passage betwixt me and my clothing; a sort of cold air flue, through which a constant ventilation was maintained that ill assorted with the season. This diminution of my form would perhaps have signified little had it not been accompanied by weakness; increasing weakness. I felt it chiefly in my limbs, from the hips downwards. My ambulatory powers were evidently on the decrease. I could not walk any distance without wanting to sit down and rest. It seemed as if a hundred weight had been attached to each foot, such a labour was it to drag them after me. I dreaded going upstairs. When evening came on I found myself regularly done up, and glad was I to recline full length upon a couch, longing as I lay for bedtime to arrive. I was now beginning to feel some anxiety about my case, not because I had grown thinner, but because I was losing strength. There could not now be any doubt that there was something wrong, or what could occasion this debility? That the treatment had reduced me, I never for a moment doubted, but that did not distress me, as I thought I had some spare flesh which I might conveniently dispense with. But that the system I was going through contributed in any measure to my weakness never entered my imagination. Of course I told the doctor all about it. According to his opinion it was my liver which was at the root of my trouble. He affirmed, as doctors always do, that mine was quite a common case,

that he had seen hundreds such, that symptoms like mine were the general result of inactivity of liver. 'You may consider yourself fortunate,' said he, 'in having come here when you did. Had you placed yourself under some allopath he would have dosed you with calomel and damaged your constitution, whereas you'll see we shall set you to rights without any mercury or any drugs at all.'

'Well but, doctor,' I replied, 'can you give me an idea of the time which it may take for the treatment to work a cure in my case, because I have now been six weeks at it, and am certainly far worse than when I came here.'

'Oh, don't say so. I really think you better. I see the greatest improvement in your appearance; perhaps it may be some weeks yet before you are quite yourself. Only persevere in the treatment and don't distress yourself about a little temporary debility.'

The prospect was not cheering. Some weeks yet! and then only 'perhaps.' I had half a mind to take a dose of calomel on the sly, but I knew not how hydropathy and calomel might suit one another, and I feared I might take cold, so I submissively adhered to the treatment, living on from day to day in hope, anxious hope, for symptoms of returning strength. But vainly did I watch for any indication of improvement. On the contrary, I was growing worse. Perceiving this, I became unhappy. I believed I was in for a long period of invalidhood, and began to have my doubts as to whether I should recover at all. I longed to be at home. A cold water establishment is, after all, a heartless place for one really out of health, and I had had quite enough of it, so I resolved, weak as I was, to come away. I communicated my determination to the doctor, who, after trying in vain to induce me to stay on, implored me not to consult an allopath, but to persist in the treatment after I reached home. But how altered was I! How different did I feel myself as I crawled with difficulty up the steps to my hall door to

what I was when I left home some two months ago! What benefit had I gotten by that two months' change? That it never should have occurred to me to connect the treatment with my debility seems to myself amazing. I was content to believe my weakness in the limbs arose from some complaint or other, if not an affection of the liver, of something equally serious, for which the best, if not the only, cure was hydropathy.

Whilst at the establishment I had caught the mania from the other patients, and had become as enthusiastic a believer in its efficacy as any of its most ardent devotees. I would not listen to a word in its disparagement, but was wont to wax hot in its defence. Accordingly, on my return home, I immediately proceeded to set myself up with the various hydropathic paraphernalia, resolved to carry out the system to the best of my ability. I embarked a small fortune in baths, bathing-sheets, and water-cans, not forgetting the article with the wooden seat for the lamp-bath operation. Two difficulties, however, met me in my attempt to set up a private water cure,—one was the erection of a douche, the other the supplying an equivalent to Jack Smart. But I was not to be discouraged, and contented myself with approximations to both as near as I could accomplish. To set up a veritable douche I found out of the question. It involved letting in a pipe through the ceiling of my room and a reservoir somewhere on the roof of my house, so I abandoned the project. But I had my douche all the same, such as it was. I procured a huge syringe, and taught my servant how to work it, and with practice he became quite expert in handling this weapon, taking an excellent shot with the jet and maintaining a steady fire at the spot selected as a target for the time being. But when he came to rub me, how I missed Jack Smart! Oh! there is an art in rubbing which not many understand. It is, in fact, a talent possessed by but a few, of whom my servant evidently was not one. I used to dread rubbing-time with him. I felt as

though I had been scraped all over with sand-paper, my skin being in a state but one remove from rawness when this process was concluded. Nevertheless I bore it with a good grace, only thinking myself lucky in having attained so fair an imitation of the model I had come from. I thus kept up these hydropathic practices all through the winter and well into the spring, watching with concern the constant increase of debility, and wondering whatever could have come to me. I had in my youth been much given to gymnastics. I had thought nothing of hanging by my heels and doing other inverted eccentricities on the horizontal bar. The muscles of my limbs had by these exercises acquired, when I was young, a hardness and a tightness which they had retained. But now, all this firmness was gone. My thighs had grown soft and flabby, and were growing more so every day.

Paralysis must, thought I, sooner or later come upon me. What a poser my case was to the doctors! I consulted not a few, but not one could detect physical disorder, or a symptom indicative of disease, functional or organic; I was sound, said they, in every respect, and with one consent they gave their decided opinion against my having any liver affection. As my object was merely to discover what was the seat of my ailment, I thought it desirable to conceal from the physicians I consulted the remedies I was resorting to. Probably any one of them would, had I told him, have said sufficient to make me drop the water-cure for ever. But I kept my secret well, and paid well for it. How long I might thus have gone on, or to what state I might at the end of a few months more have reduced myself, it were difficult to say, but as the weather was growing finer, I resolved to try, as a *dernier ressort*, what change of air would do. 'Go,' said some friend or other, 'to some bracing place by the sea-side.' I selected Ramsgate—a bracing place enough in April in all conscience. But hydropathy was to go down with me; it was only to be suspended for a single day—the day I

spent upon the journey. My portable douche and baths, all, I think, were stowed away in the van, for fear I could get no baths at Ramsgate, everything except the kitchen chair, which I supposed would be procurable anywhere, the article with the wooden seat being, I knew, in universal vogue. Here again I commenced devoting myself to my aquatic remedies, believing, like a fool, that the water-cure would yet do great things for me.

But here, at Ramsgate, providentially for me, the mystery of my case became at last unravelled, and I was released from the delusion by which I had so long been bound as by a spell. Soon after my arrival I had recourse to one more physician, I should be afraid to affix a number to him, I had consulted so many. I anticipated nothing new from him, but when ill-health has set in and there is no symptom of amendment one is glad to consult everybody. And I shall never forget that consultation. After submitting to the same examination with which I had grown so painfully familiar, my new medical adviser remarked,

'There is no disease about you that I can discover, but your case resembles that of one who has had a severe chill. Are you conscious of anything of the kind?'

Not being able to call to mind having suffered from a violent cold at the time my troubles first began, I replied in the negative.

'You are sure you have had no rheumatic affection at any period, say within the last twelve months?'

'Not that I can remember.'

'Well, my impression is, your debility proceeds entirely from the spine. You may perhaps on some occasion have slept in a damp bed, or else you have made a practice of putting on damp linen. I am convinced the spine in your case has somehow been severely chilled. You cannot account for it in any way?'

A strange sensation came over me as he said these words. The truth darted in upon my mind for the first time. I felt all in a glow, while my cheeks became flushed with the surprise of one who has

made a startling discovery. The man appeared to perceive it, though I said nothing, for in a tone of eagerness he quickly asked me—

‘Why, what—what is the matter?’

‘Doctor,’ said I, ‘I believe you have hit upon the truth, and discovered the source of all my trouble. I have been for months, and am still, undergoing the cold-water treatment. Since December last I have been at it. Sometimes twice, sometimes thrice daily have I undergone the regimen, ringing changes on the hydropathic roster. I have taken sitz-baths and lamp-baths. I have been packed and douched. Compresses and bandages have been applied to me here and there and everywhere, added to which, the amount I have taken in cold potations would, I believe, go far to fill a small reservoir.’

He smiled, I suppose a smile of self-satisfaction, and replied, ‘Then I do not at all wonder to see you as you are.’

He then proceeded to make some further inquiries, and I went more into a detail of what I had been doing. He was bitter in his condemnation of the lamp-bath, and further assured me, as many other practitioners have subsequently done, that the practice of sitting in cold water, and allowing cold water to be trickled down the spine, would take the strength out of a Hercules.

‘But tell me candidly,’ I proceeded, ‘what is your opinion as to my recovering my strength? Do you think there is any prospect of the muscles regaining their firmness, so that I may be able to walk as I did formerly?’

‘Well, to tell you the truth, you have let matters proceed rather far, and your efforts to induce paralysis of the limbs have been well-nigh successful; at the same time, I see no reason why you should not recover. You will excuse my speaking more positively. What you have now to do is, of course, to drop the cold-water treatment, and take every means to neutralize its effects upon your frame. I think, for the present, you had better discontinue it even as a beverage, and take three or four glasses of good port wine

instead every day. And, if I were you, I would proceed to one or other of the German watering-places, and take a course of the natural warm-baths.’

I think I never paid a fee with so much satisfaction, for I felt the man was right in his opinion. But, how I blasphemed hydropathy! How I loathed the very sight of everything connected with the system! I was far too weak for any act of violence, otherwise it is probable I should have spent half an hour or so in giving vent to my exasperation, and smashing up my whole apparatus, wooden chair included, with the poker. How I now rated myself for my own folly, simpleton that I had been! I could blame no one else, for I was a free agent, and had yielded to the force only of persuasion.

Yet I was still far from being sanguine of recovery. What, thought I, could bring back strength to limbs that had once lost it? What possibly could impart firmness to muscles that had once grown flabby? However, I resolved nothing should remain untried which my last adviser had recommended, and I made up my mind to start for some German Bad. Which of them all was it to be? For some days, Granville, on the Waters of Germany, was my study; and after a careful perusal of this work—the only one upon the subject—I came to the conclusion that Wildbad would be the place for me. To Wildbad, accordingly, I hastened; and ere a week had expired I was dipping in its waters. Before doing so, however, I called in one more doctor, a German this time, by name Hausman. I was told it was not safe to bathe without advice. He struck me as being a sensible and intelligent fellow; the only thing he said which shook my faith in his opinion being his confident assertion that I should leave Wildbad quite strong, and able to walk about with ease.

The springs of Wildbad are very warm—considerably, if I mistake not, over the temperature of the blood—yet I was to commence by remaining half an hour immersed in them to the chin, increasing by de-

gresses the period of immersion, till I spent a whole hour in the water. I had always held the notion that warm bathing induced weakness; but this was to give strength! I confess, I went to this new system with some misgiving.

I could, of course, get no port wine, but I strove to console myself with sparkling Moselle instead, which I dare say is every bit as strengthening a beverage for an invalid, whilst many times more refreshing.

I stayed at a hotel, where the fare was excellent, though anything but plain; a first-rate *dîner à la Russe* being served up every day, to which I, notwithstanding my infirmities, did ample justice. Here I abode some weeks, bathing, eating, and drinking, thinking all the while what a jolly life this was, if I were only well, though willingly would I have exchanged the Moselle and the French cooking for a mutton chop and a glass of water, with the strength I formerly enjoyed.

At the end of my first week I found myself no better, nor, indeed, at the expiration of a fortnight;

and I was in despair; but when three weeks had passed, I imagined I felt somewhat less exhaustion after trying to take exercise. It might be my fancy; but it encouraged me to persevere, and I did so, and at the end of a few weeks more there were evident symptoms of returning strength.

Yes, I could now manage a mile, and even walk up-stairs without the sensation of lifting a hundred-weight at each step. With what delight did I hail these indications of returning strength! I believed that I had turned the corner, and that my recovery was only a question of time.

And so it proved. I left Wildbad a different man. Health being my sole object, I spent some months in travelling, getting daily better, till I grew quite strong.

All this happened a few years ago, and I know not that I am now any the worse for what I went through. Perhaps I am the better, for I have learnt from my experience, as a general rule, to avoid playing tricks with my constitution, and in particular to give a wide berth to hydropathy.

THE INTER-UNIVERSITY GAMES.

TRULY the amateur pedestrian, athlete, and gymnast have no cause to lament any decline in their favourite pursuits during the last few years, and particularly during the year 1866. Since the Oxford and Cambridge games were held on the Christchurch ground (for the third time only) in that year we have seen an amateur champion meeting; and an extraordinary number of clubs, new and old, have held meetings in all parts of the kingdom. Few, if any, of these meetings have, however, as yet attained equal prestige with that which took place for the fourth time at Beaufort House, Walham Green, on the 12th of April, 1867, namely, the Oxford and Cambridge athletic games. It is unnecessary to speak of their popularity; for this none could doubt who were present and saw

the course thronged by eager spectators (by far the greater number proclaiming their partisanship by costume as well as demeanour), or who heard the re-echoing shouts of 'Pitman, Michell, Long, Scott, and Pelham.' Although we are one of those who hope that in future years the games will again be held at the Universities themselves, yet the sight was one which was worth going miles to see, and to witness one half of the contests which took place, and of which we can only hope to give some faint idea, would have amply repaid a visit to the ground.

Since we left the Christchurch ground on the 10th of March, 1866 (when the sounds of 'Laing' and 'Long' were yet in our ears), great changes have taken place in the athletic positions of both Univer-

sities. At Oxford an University Athletic Club has been formed similar to that founded in 1865 at Cambridge; and already, we think, the fruits of united action may be traced. The frequency of contests, and the opportunities for practice which the foundation of such a club affords, cannot fail to bring out talent which otherwise would have remained quite unexercised.

At both Universities running paths have been laid down, each one-third of a mile in length; that at Cambridge being in the form of a flattened oval, and that at Oxford of a rectangle with rounded angles. The style which running on a path usually produces is not at present so apparent as might have been expected, there being still a good deal of flat-footed running, but this will doubtless vanish in time. Very fast races indeed have been run during the last year on the Cambridge path (which is a faster path by a good deal than the Oxford); and, in fact, it may be taken to be one of the easiest and best running paths in the kingdom. We think if some of the old light blues who once donned flannels in the old pavilion, and afterwards subscribed to build the new one, could see Fenners on a fine afternoon in the end of March, they would indeed wonder at the energy and go-a-head spirit displayed by young Cambridge. The Oxonians, too, are waking up, but they will, we are sure, pardon an old hand for saying that it was not before the time had come for so doing. We must not, however, delay too long at the post, for the starter has given the word 'get ready;' and we have a long though very pleasant task before us in attempting to give to those who could not be present a brief account of the Inter-University Games in 1867.

The nine events included in the programme were the same as those of last year, but they were arranged in a different order, so that Maitland and Little, who represented their respective Universities in both jumping and running, might have their lighter work first.

At a quarter-past two there emerged from the black ring of spec-

tators, who, in ranks four and five deep, thronged nearly the whole course, four figures, all equally keen to score first blood for their own side. The light blue was represented by T. G. Little, of St. Peter's, whose name is enough to frighten any ordinary jumper out of the field, and who has lately striven, but not with equal success, on the running path, and C. E. Green, of Trinity, well known to all 'Varsity cricketers.

Oxford were supported by F. W. Parsons, of Magdalen, who jumped so pluckily for them last year, and F. S. O'Grady, of St. John's, a young one, who will, to all appearances, make a very good one as time goes on. The bar was placed at 4 ft. 10 in., which, I need hardly say, they all cleared; and it was raised two inches at a time up to 5 ft. 6 in., and one inch afterwards. At 5 ft. 7 in. Parsons went out, and the last hope of Oxford died away when O'Grady failed in clearing 5 ft. 8 in. Green and Little now held a short conference, and ultimately decided to jump once more. The bar was accordingly raised to 5 ft. 9 in., which Little cleared, but Green could not. Thus the Cantabs scored one two for the first event, a result which was truly foreshadowed by the results of the two University Games, in which Green jumped 5 ft. 7½ in., and the Oxonians tied at 5 ft. 4 in. Little has somewhat lost the certainty of his jumping, as he knocked the bar down several times, whereas formerly he seldom jumped more than once at each height. Green jumped with great steadiness, never failing until 5 ft. 7 in. O'Grady is a very good and likely jumper, tucking his legs well underneath him, and making sure of each try; and the light blue will find in him an awkward customer next year if he continues to improve on his present as much as he has done on his old form. There is nothing that astonishes outsiders, and those who have not seen much of athletic games, more than good height jumping. The effort, or rather the force required to raise from eleven to thirteen stone over a bar 5 ft. 9 in. high can be better

imagined than appreciated, and especially when it is remembered that the spring is made from one foot alone. In years gone by 5 ft. 3 in. was thought a wonderful jump, and the idea of a man jumping 5 ft. 8 in. or 5 ft. 9 in. from ordinary turf was never dreamed of. These heights will perhaps be in their turn beaten; but we think that Roupell, Little, and Green will long be the mythical heroes of jumpers.

When the four starters trotted down to the post for the 100 yards, one could see in the demeanour of the Oxford partisans a perceptible gleam of confidence, and, indeed, it was not misplaced, for they ran J. M. Colmore, of Brasenose, who was so unmistakably *the* hundred-yard runner of 1866, when he won the Oxford University, Inter-University, and Amateur Champion 100 yards. His fellow champion was J. Somervell, of St. John's College, who proved himself a first-class man. Cambridge, however, seem at last to have brought out a sprint runner in the person of E. A. Pitman, of St. John's, to whom we shall have again to allude in this brief history. The light blue was also worn by C. C. Corfe, of Jesus College, who, although not second in the University Games, challenged the second man, M. Templeton, of Trinity, and having defeated him was chosen as second horse. After several false starts and breaks away they got off, not too evenly, when Colmore first shot out; at fifty yards Pitman was decidedly in the rear, Somervell and Colmore apparently shutting him out; but at about fifteen yards from home he came with a rush such as is seldom seen in so short a race, and landed the light blue by about eighteen inches. Colmore was second, but not much in front of Somervell, and the time of the winner was 10½ seconds. This performance stamps Pitman as quite in the first class of sprint runners, and he has vastly improved since he ran in 1865, when he was beaten in the second heat for the 100 by Pelham and Hood.

We fancy Colmore could not face the wind as strongly as the winner, for he seemed to us to die away in

the last fifteen yards, and Corfe, of whom much was expected, did not seem in his best form. Whenever the four men meet again a wonderful race may be expected, but certainly at present Pitman must be stamped the best, from the way in which he caught his men in the last fifty yards.

The next event on the card was the Broad Jump, and it produced a most exciting contest, the result being in doubt up to the very last jump. The Oxford representatives were W. F. Maitland and W. G. Edwards, both of Christchurch; the Cambridge, C. A. Absolom, of Trinity, and the inevitable Little. The Cantabs were the favourites, as their broad jump was twenty inches better than that at Oxford; but good judges knew it would be no walk over, as Maitland last year covered 19 ft. 11 in., and Little has not been jumping up to his old form. Each competitor was, as usual, allowed six jumps, taken in order, but the man who has made the best jump reserves his tries until he is beaten. At his third jump Maitland covered 19 ft. 10 in., and the two Cantabs did all they knew to beat it, but without success, until Absolom, with his very last try, made the magnificent jump of 20 ft. 2 in. Maitland, who had been (like Little last year) calmly observing their efforts to reach him, now had his three reserved 'tries,' and at his fifth attempt he cleared 20 ft. 1 in., but one inch behind Absolom; no further, however, could he get, and so the light blue scored the third win in succession.

It seems rather presumptive for any one (even an old hand) to pretend to advise such adepts in jumping, but it did strike me, in marking how often these first-class men failed to jump nearly their best, that they did not run to the 'take off' in what used to be considered the scientific manner; they so frequently patter, *i. e.*, take very short steps, when nearing the mark. Now I have always observed that the best jumps are made when a man gets thoroughly into his stride, and comes down to the mark at his top speed, which no man can do if,

instead of striding out, he is palpably shortening his step. Of course much must depend on a man's power of judging his distance, but I am convinced that much is sacrificed to the idea of taking very short steps, in order to get nearer to the take off; it is quite as easy to judge the distance *for long strides*.

The competitors for the Broad Jump had hardly left the ground when the four hurdle champions entered it. In this contest the light blue was worn by Mr. Fitzherbert, of St. John's, who last year won the Amateur Champion Broad Jump, and by H. M. Thompson, of Trinity, who in the years 1865 and 1866 ran in the final heat of the hurdles at Cambridge, being beaten by the great Tiffany, Milvain, and Hood. In this year he fell and was beaten in the first heats, but on public form he should have won. For Oxford there appeared A. Hillyard, of Pembroke, and C. N. Jackson, of Magdalen; the former of whom ran without success in the Oxford University hurdles in 1866. After a very level start they ran almost together to the third hurdle, Thompson being then in the rear. Jackson, the Oxford second horse, now came out, and running with great strength, led all the rest of the way, and won by two feet from Thompson, who came up very well in the last five hurdles. The style of all four was good, and the time also, considering the wind. Oxford thus scored their first win, and their spirits revived again. We think that it is a very near thing between Jackson and Thompson, and if they were to run four or five times the results might be strangely variable.

In Putting the Weight all the competitors were new hands except R. Waltham, of St. Peter's, who wore the light blue last year, and was then second to Elliott, also of Cambridge. His fellow competitor was Absalom, the winner of the Broad Jump; and for Oxford there appeared T. Batson, of Lincoln, and W. Burgess, of Queen's. Waltham, at his very first attempt, put the shot the 'really great' distance of 34 ft. 7 in., and then stood out whilst the three

others made their eighteen attempts to beat it, Batson, of Oxford, succeeding in reaching 31 ft. 11 in., and Absalom was close up. When Waltham had been declared the winner, he took his five remaining tries, and with one of them, the fourth, he put 34 ft. 9 in., which was the put of the day. Since this competition was first introduced each year has shown an improvement, but we fancy that it will be some time before Waltham's performance is surpassed.

The next race, the One Mile, has always been considered as one of the events of these meetings, and both sides anxiously hoped for a win. I wish I had space to do more than briefly enumerate the names of the starters, and give some idea of what they each have done previously; but anything like a correct account of their performances would take long indeed. There started for Oxford S. G. Scott, of Magdalen, and T. W. Fletcher, of Pembroke. Scott ran second to Laing in the Oxford University Mile, being beaten by five yards in 4 min. 46 sec., Fletcher being third; the latter, it will also be remembered, ran for Oxford in the Mile last year. The Cambridge men were W. C. Gibbs, of Jesus College, E. Royds, of Trinity Hall, and T. G. Little. Gibbs, who ran for Cambridge last year, has been but little before the world of late, as he sprained his foot some few weeks since, and was unable to compete in his University Games, but he won a mile handicap at Cambridge in the spring in 4 min. 36 sec. Royds is 'the same which was' second to Garnett (and a very good second to a very good man) in the four-mile Amateur Champion Race at Beaufort House last year; he also won the Cambridge Mile this year from Long in 4 min. 36 sec. Little we all know as a jumper, and as a runner he has been doing a good deal of late, and is doubtless best known by his defeating several men in the Trinity Hall open half mile this year, and by his performance in the two miles against Oxford in 1866. As will have been seen from the above statistics, the race looked on paper a good thing for Cam-

bridge, especially as Laing, who has been doing wonders at every distance, was lame and unable to start. The race itself does not admit of much description, as after the first lap (there being three in all) Scott took the lead, and, running with great strength, won by six yards from Boyds. The latter spurted very gamely in the last lap, but we think he should have made more effort to keep close to his opponent. The time was 4 min. 41 sec. Scott is a runner of very great promise; he has a very good and steady style, without any great showiness, but a wonderful amount of strength; and we fancy that if the running was made for him through the first three quarters of a mile he would do it in first-rate time. Boyds has also shown himself a very good man, but he is very weak at the end of his races.

And now the attention of all was turned towards what may be justly styled the third blue ribbon of the meeting, the Two Miles, One Mile, and Quarter, decidedly being the races in which most interest is centred, and the next event, viz., the Quarter, produced one of the most magnificent struggles and gamest races ever seen. The Cambridge starters were the renowned F. G. Pelham, of Trinity, who has for two years borne her colours to the fore, and E. A. Pitman, the 100 yards winner. These two ran first and second in the Cambridge games, when Pelham gained a decisive victory, although Pitman ran a most determined race. The Oxford were W. F. Maitland, who was beaten by two yards only by W. G. Knight, of Magdalen, the Oxford champion in '65 and '66, and W. J. Frere, of Magdalen, who was third in the same race. The times at the two Universities were as nearly as possible equal; but the confidence in the almost invincible Pelham caused the Cantabs to be made hot favourites. At the word 'off' Pitman darted out in the most extraordinary manner, and increasing his speed, at 150 yards had a lead of twelve yards. Rounding the bend, Pelham and Maitland, and afterwards Frere, closed up to him, and fifty yards

from home they were all together, and Pelham began to show in front. Shouts of 'Pelham,' 'Maitland,' 'Pitman' resounded on all sides; but instead of going clean away, as he is wont, at about fifteen yards from the tape, Pelham faltered, when Pitman, coming with the gamest possible rush, won by two yards; Maitland, Pelham, and Frere were all together, but the judges gave it by a head to Maitland. This decision did not give universal satisfaction, as some thought Pelham pulled off second place; but we believe the majority upheld the decision. The time was just under 52 seconds, and, considering the wind, was indeed fast. Pitman has, as we have already said, proved himself one of the gamest and best runners in England, and we are sure both he and Maitland will pardon us for saying that they had a stroke of luck in defeating Pelham. It is very seldom Pelham dies away in the last fifty yards, and our own idea is that he was weak on the day. Frere also both proved himself quite first-class; in fact, where all are so good it seems unfair to particularize. The contest itself was the finest race for a quarter we ever saw.

The eighth event in the programme was Throwing the Hammer, which is, to our minds, one of the most interesting and graceful contests. Oxford had W. H. Croker, of Trinity, who in 1865 represented his University at Putting the Weight, and in 1866 was with Morgan, in Throwing the Hammer; the second representative was W. Headley, of University. Cambridge were represented by G. R. Thornton, of Jesus, the winner of last year, and J. R. Eyre, of Clara. The Cambridge men have much improved in this exercise since last year, when Thornton won with 86 feet. For the first few tries the contest was fairly equal, Eyre and Croker having the best of it, when, with his third try, the former hurled the 'ponderous missile' 98 ft. 10 in. This was a really splendid throw, and was remarkable because it was in a dead straight line from the centre of the scratch, and at right

angles to it, whereas many of the others were, to say the least, erratic. Thornton was second, with an almost equally good throw of 97 ft. 3 in.; Croker being first for Oxford with 90 ft. 10 in. We were surprised to see that the university authorities still kept to their old way of measuring the length of the throws, viz., from the centre of the scratch, because at so many meetings the fairer way of measuring by parallel lines, or from the footstep of the thrower, has been adopted, owing to the manifest advantages gained by crooked throws in the old method. This victory made the light blue's sixth win, which, as may be imagined, caused the Oxonians no small disappointment.

After waiting but a very few minutes, the eyes of all were turned to the six athletes who were starting for the last and greatest contest, the Two Miles. The dark blue jersey was worn by R. L. N. Michell, of Christchurch (brother of E. B. Michell, of Magdalen—the Diamond Sculler—who in 1865 ran for Oxford in the Mile), the winner of the two miles race at Oxford this year, by J. H. Morgan, of Christchurch, and J. W. Fletcher, of Pembroke. Fletcher we already know; Morgan is a young one, but likely to be a good one some day. The light blue sent out G. G. Kennedy and C. H. Long, both of Trinity, and A. E. R. Micklefield, of St. John's. Kennedy defeated Long in the Cambridge University two miles this year, but only by two yards, in 10 min. 10 sec. Long, we need hardly say, is the same that ran such a gallant race with Laing, of Christchurch, last year. The Oxford University time was 10'30, so that, on public form, Kennedy or Long ought to have won, even taking into account the difference of the respective paths at Oxford and Cambridge. At starting, Micklefield went off at a great pace, followed by Michell and Long; but after half a mile Morgan passed the two latter and raced with Micklefield until the end of the first mile, which was done in 5 min. 3 sec. Through the beginning of the second mile Morgan led, with Long and

Michell not far behind, and Kennedy, who was slightly outpaced, 15 yards in the rear. Entering the last quarter, Long drew rapidly ahead, and at 250 yards from the finish was 11 yards in front of Michell. Then again the dark blue crept up, and, on entering the 150 yards straight, a most determined set-to took place. Each was loudly cheered and called on by their friends; and after running together for the last 60 yards, Michell threw himself in front of the post, and won by a bare foot. The time was 10 minutes. Morgan was third; and Kennedy, who would have finished very fast, was knocked over by the crowd. We never saw a more magnificent struggle; in fact, the pluck which has always characterized these races, and especially the long-distance races, almost surpasses that displayed in any other pedestrian contests, amateur or professional. For Laing, Long, and Michell to have run two such races as the Two Miles in 1866 and 1867, the one a dead-heat, the other won by a foot, speaks for itself. Michell is as game a runner as ever stepped, and has a very lasting style. He, moreover, ran with great judgment in not endeavouring to race with Long, when he went ahead at the beginning of the 'last quarter;' and we certainly think that Long was wrong in doing so, for had he left it later, and made the effort in the last 150 yards, we think the result might have been reversed. These, however, are idle speculations: Michell won, and won well.

So ended the Inter-University Athletic Sports in 1867; and while the crowd are clearing away, and the excitement is subsiding, let us look a little at the respective merits of the competing parties and their champions.

In this year Cambridge were first in the Quarter Mile, the Hundred Yards, the High Jump, the Broad Jump, Putting the Weight, and Throwing the Hammer. Oxford were first in the Two Miles, One Mile, and Hurdles. Cambridge were second in the Two Miles, One Mile, Hurdles, High Jump, and Hammer; Oxford in the Quarter, Hundred,

Broad Jump, and Weight. In all, Cambridge gained 6 first, and 5 second places; and Oxford 3 first and 4 second.

Looking back through the vista of the fast retiring years, we remember that, in 1864, Cambridge had 4 first and 7 second, against Oxford's 4 first and 1 second; in 1865, Cambridge 6 first and 6 second, Oxford 3 first and 3 second; and in 1866, Cambridge 5 first and 3 second, against Oxford 3 first and 5 second; and there was one dead-heat. Dark blue, take care! Cambridge are well ahead again this year, and, from what we hear, mean to do better still.

We always feel it an invidious task to speak of individual merit, where all are so good; and, strangely enough, there were so many champions in 1867 who took part in more than one contest, which makes the task of selection even more difficult. Little appeared in three, Pitman, Maitland, Abecolom, and Fletcher in two each; but in looking for the 'victor ludorum,' if one there be, we feel that the nominal honour which was in 1864, by general consent, given to Darbyshire, in 1865 to Webster, and in 1866 to Laing, must in 1867 fall on E. A. Pitman, the winner of the Quarter and the Hundred Yards; and none will, we think, deny that he has fairly earned the title.

It is curious to notice that in 1864 the Oxonians and Cantabs won respectively exactly what they have in this year lost, and the victory has been secured by the new contests introduced in the later years, and by one hurdle-race having been struck out from the programme.

The Judges were:—for Oxford, R. A. H. Mitchell, of Balliol, Eton, Lord's, &c., &c., and R. E. Webster, of Trinity, and late of Fenner's; both of whose names are sufficient guarantee of their suitability for the post. The Referee was the Rev. T. H. T. Hopkins, of Magdalen, Oxford, than whom no better could be found, for he is one who for years has taken a lively interest in all athletic pursuits.

Three men there were of last

year's champions whose absence we—and not only we, but all except perhaps those who would have had to run against them—regretted; they were, Laing, of Christchurch, Nolan, of St. John's, Oxford, and Cheetham, of Trinity Hall. It needs no words of ours to recall how ably they, in 1866, wore the dark blue and the light; and doubtless on a future occasion they will, in racing slang, 'be heard of again.' Laing was lamed, we hear, from running on the path; Nolan has been prohibited from running for a time; and T. H. Cheetham sprained his knee, and it was thought unwise for him to try it by training.

We tried again this year to trace the educational pedigrees of the winners and competitors, but as it seemed rather peculiar for an elderly stranger to ask them all where 'they were raised,' we had to be content with but scanty gleanings. This, however, is the result of them. Harrow claims Long, Maitland, Kennedy, and Somervell; Eton, Pelham, Thompson, and Royds; Green hails from Uppingham, Colmore from Rugby, O'Grady from Charterhouse, and Gibbs from Marlborough, whilst Brighton College trained the young ideas of Pitman. Turning, however, to colleges, where (thank the secretaries) the cards speak for themselves, we see that Christchurch claims the lion share of the Oxford champions, and Magdalen the next. At Cambridge, though Trinity leads the van, yet Jesus maintains the athletic fame that a Thornton first gave it, and St. John's claims Pitman and two others.

We are sorry that some of the changes proposed by many who take interest in these games have not been this year visible in the programme. First and foremost we would mention the introduction of a walking race, which we still think would produce such an admirable contest and always an exciting race. We have been told, and have no reason to doubt it, that the seven mile walking race at Cambridge was this year won by a comparative novice, and that many who entered and walked well had only practised

for a few weeks. Oxford, too, now has walking races in some of her college sports, and we can see no reason for longer delay in introducing one at the Inter-University Games. Another change which we think would be for the better is the proposed substitution of a four mile for the two mile race for reasons which are obvious. One point more suggests itself to us: why is not the High Pole Jump included in the programme? It is a most admirable exercise, and when well done about the most graceful and exciting thing possible. A friend, to whom we are indebted for much valuable information, informs us that both at Oxford and Cambridge it is but little practised: we can only say we are sorry to hear it, for in days gone by it was a favourite amusement of many.

Before closing our brief and hurried memoir we feel tempted to say something about the removal to London of these annual festivals. Looking at the question from the point of view of outsiders, and not regarding 'dons' with the eyes of an undergraduate or even through the medium of the ideas with which the undergraduates of the present day endeavour to imbue us, we do feel that those most respected functionaries ('dons') have been guilty of shortsighted policy. The meeting has to us, even as outsiders, lost half its charm—the run to Oxford or Cambridge the night before, when the majority of the competitors met together, and with friendly chaff talked over the chances of the morrow; in London they are scattered far and wide, and have no chance of all or even many of them seeing one another. Besides, we do most assuredly believe that the mutual visits to either Uni-

versity were engendering a liberal spirit towards each other, and, in their quiet way, working much good. Of course the arguments on the other side can be readily imagined—the discipline and quiet of the University is for one night set totally aside, and indulgence and, in some cases, excess are the consequences. Now this may be all perfectly true, though we ourselves doubt it; but our experience of University men is, that putting a stop to what was, in its worst form, but the superabundance of youth and animal spirits is not the best way to make men more amenable to discipline and rule at other times. We have stated before, and we can only repeat it, that, looked upon from an outsider's point of view, athletic games, both at and between the Universities, have worked a vast amount of good, more perhaps than often falls to the share of other more worthy schemes of mental or bodily improvement; and we believe that to dwell upon the abuse of them, or upon the evils connected with them, is not the way to counteract the abuses. In short, if, as we are told, the games are to be permanently removed to London because of the excitement and disturbance which prevailed on the former occasions on which they have been held, we believe that they will soon lose their character, and, it may be, decline both in interest and importance.

For another year, dark and light blue, we wish you farewell, and be sure that, whether your next 'Olympia' are held in London, at Oxford, or Cambridge, we, old and rheumatic though we be, hope to be there to witness, to admire, and it may be to record your efforts.

D. D. R.



THE LAST RUN WITH THE STAGHOUNDS.

THE infatuation of woman! No sooner was Mrs. Felix made aware of her husband's prowess in the field than she insisted on his hunting something better than a poor little hare. She began to read up encyclopædias on all matters concerning the ancient sports of England. She busied herself with the history of the Henries to find how often they went royally chasing the deer. She compelled Felix to order a scarlet coat; and set her eldest girl—that poor little mite of a thing with a chirping voice so unlike the resonant organ of her mother—to sing 'Old Towler.' She was indignant at the pusillanimity of her husband in not adding his uncertain bass to the chorus,

'This day a stag must die';

but he escaped by observing that the air was set rather high for him.

Felix, on the other hand, was by no means loth to cease his connection with the 'thistle-whippers.' After having killed Lord Switchem's best hound, he had no particular wish to see either the pack or his lordship again; and as a keen, barbaric desire to hunt and kill was growing up in his respectable citizen soul, my friend turned his attention to the staghounds. He became acquainted with some gentlemen of the nearest hunt; he talked of a big subscription; he made, without seeking my advice, large additions to his stables (a circumstance which had nearly sundered our friendship); and at length, having been asked to a breakfast which was to celebrate a grand meet in the south of Kent, he got Mr. Wheatear to include me in the invitation, and together we went.

The meet was somewhere about eighteen miles from the Beeches; and as we had to send our horses on the previous evening down to the nearest village, I had no opportunity of criticising in a friendly manner the new purchase which Mr. Felix proposed to ride. Next morning,

however, saw my friend's wagonette drive round to the door of his house; and I had the pleasure of witnessing Mrs. Felix, in the utmost gorgeousness of her attire, superintend the disposition of the whole of her children inside the vehicle. She had come forth to witness the achievements of her lord. She had just discovered that Alfred the Great was a famous hunter, and that Edward the Confessor dearly loved to follow a pack of hounds; and she was striving to determine whether she would liken Mr. Felix to Sir Walter Tyrrell when her husband took the reins in his right hand, the whip in his left, the groom let the horse's head go free, and away we went.

But we had not gone twenty yards when Mr. Felix, fumbling with the reins, had taken the off wheels of the wagonette on to the lawn. He wrenched at the horse's mouth; down they came again with a bang upon the path; the horse stood upright on his hind legs for several seconds, and had nearly thrown Mrs. Felix out; then he set off with a great clatter along the gravelled avenue. Felix flung the whip into the road, and held on by the reins with both hands; but the next moment there was a terrific crash, the wooden post of the gate was hurled down, Mrs. Felix was tilted over upon her four children, while her husband, suddenly resolving to sacrifice his dignity in order to secure the safety of his neck, besought me to add my strength to his in holding the reins. But the horse was in reality no fire-eater, although Mrs. Felix, so soon as he was quieted, hysterically insisted upon her husband selling him off-hand for twenty pounds; while she kept her arms outstretched in a fluttering manner over her children. Felix, with his white lips and trembling fingers, looked as though he would have parted with him for ten; and with a great and rather comical effort to appear self-possessed, asked if I would 'take the reins a bit until he

lit a cigar.' I took the reins, and he lit the cigar; but as he showed no signs of eagerness to have them back again I changed seats with him, and we placidly drove down the long, quiet, undulating, and not unpicturesque road which here cuts Kent into east and west.

'Oh,' he suddenly cried, 'what have I done with the whip?'

'The last I saw of it,' I replied, 'was the crop sticking out of a laurel-bush. People generally do find a whip held in the left hand rather in the way.'

'Of course,' he said, with a look of indifference, but with a rosy blush—'of course I held it there until I should settle in my seat, only that ugly brute broke away without giving me a chance.'

And as we passed through the quaint little villages and along the pleasant country lanes, symptoms of the coming hunt began to show themselves. It was to be a very fine affair, and all the country-side had come out to see the show. Vehicles of every description crept up hill and rumbled down dale in the one direction; people came out from the cottages and houses and took the same way; gentlemen on horseback trotted peacefully by, taking as little as possible out of their animals. Then the morning, which had been rather dismal, gave promise of better weather; and as a few faint shafts of misty light broke through the dense dull gray of the south, Mrs. Felix brightened up wonderfully, and vowed the scenery was finer than any photographs of Switzerland she had ever seen.

Felix did not seem so enthusiastic.

'How many people would be on horseback, did you say?' he asked.

'Probably over two hundred.'

'And many spectators?'

'Half a mile of them: every one a keen critic, from the ladies in their carriages to the clodhoppers along the hedges.'

'Well,' said he, almost savagely, 'you may talk of the fun of putting up hurdles for people to jump in presence of all that crowd; but I don't see it. I say there are plenty of hedges and ditches and streams

to be jumped without adding artificial dangers to the hunt.'

'But a baby could jump them.'

'I told you before I wasn't a baby, and if a baby could jump them what's the use of putting them up?'

'For the amusement of the spectators.'

'What you call amusement I suppose means a lot of the riders—perhaps fathers of families—tumbling and breaking their necks. That may be amusement; but I shouldn't think it was for the children who were left orphans.'

Mr. Felix spoke quite bitterly, addressing me as if I had been busy all night in putting up these frail lines of fences. Indeed his wife was shocked by this exhibition of a morbid dread, and rebuked him severely.

'When the Norman princes went out hunting,' she observed, 'they not only risked a fall from their horse, but also being attacked by a hart at bay, and being shot by an arrow into the bargain.'

'But I'm not a Norman prince,' said he, sulkily. 'The Norman princes were a lot of thieves, and I wish they had stayed at home.'

Now this was a cruel blow to Mrs. Felix; for not only had she a strong liking for all sportsman-princes, but some friend of hers had further assured her that the name of Felix was an old and honourable one, and that an application to Heralds' College would certainly secure to her husband the possession of a noble ancestry and a neat crest—perhaps with the motto, 'Felix, qui potuit.' The discussion, however, was lost in our approach to Mr. Wheatear's house—a tall, peaked building of red brick which stood some distance down a by-road. At the point where this road joined the main road stood a large inn; and here were congregated such clusters of carriages waiting for sheds, horses waiting for stabling, servants waiting for their masters, and idlers of all descriptions as to wholly block up the thoroughfare. In vain Mr. Felix looked out for his man. Horses there were of every shape and colour, and grooms of all sizes and ages; but there was no trace of the right groom and the right

horses. Finally it was arranged that I should drive Mrs. Felix to a good position on the by-road, whence she might see her husband's first dash away after the hounds, while he went in quest of his steed.

Already half a mile of this road was occupied by carriages placed near to the hedge, and overlooking the course which had been chalked out for the deer. Thicker clusters, however, were around those positions whence a good view of the jumping could be obtained; for across Mr. Wheatear's meadows stretched two long, low lines of hurdles, over which all intending huntsmen were expected to leap. Presently Mr. Felix, coming up, brought with him his groom, who was now appointed to look after the wagonette horse, lest Mrs. Felix should be frightened during the interval in which her husband would be at breakfast.

As we slowly wriggled between carriage-wheels and horses' legs, on our way back to Mr. Wheatear's house, it was plain that Felix was very nervous and not a little angry.

'It's all very well,' said he; 'but I don't believe in gentlemen being trotted out like circus-riders for the benefit of a lot of ploughmen. I say it isn't sport at all. I wonder they haven't two or three clowns to make jokes; and it's a pity the meadows aren't laid with sawdust.'

'And would you have those ladies drive all this way for nothing? Surely they ought to see a little bit of the run.'

'I wish the ladies would stay at home and mind their own business,' said he, snappishly. 'A woman even looks better sitting at a sewing-machine, making ridiculous cotton gowns, than sitting in an open carriage and gaping like a fool at what she doesn't understand.'

I could not account for this sudden acerbity on the part of the gentlest of men. But cold fowl and champagne sweeten the temper wonderfully. As we wormed our way through the crowd that had gathered in Mr. Wheatear's front garden, and squeezed ourselves into places at the breakfast-table, I observed that a milder influence began to dawn

upon my friend's face. He was particularly polite in passing things to the master of the hounds, who was within arm's-length of him. He laughed merrily at Mr. Wheatear's joke about the spotless scarlet of his coat—a joke that had done service in welcoming strangers when Mr. Wheatear was a gawky lad who hung about the doors of his father's big room on occasions like the present. There was another gentleman to whom Mr. Felix was profusely civil, handing him all manner of unnecessary condiments and superfluous dishes, which the stranger was courteous enough to pretend to use. He, my friend afterwards, with an awe-struck air, informed me, was the Duc de —, who never missed Mr. Wheatear's meet.

As the champagne flowed more and more freely Mr. Felix grew more and more courageous. He said that, after all, there was something noble in hunting a stag—something finer than in prowling about hedges for a miserable hare. As the gentlemen rose in turn to propose the health of the master of the hounds, the giver of the breakfast, and everybody and everything connected with the hunt, Mr. Felix applauded the speeches in a very vehement manner, and informed me privately that 'if it wasn't for fear of the short-hand-writer who was taking notes, he would like to propose the health of Mr. Wheatear a second time on behalf of the strangers present.'

It seemed to me that Felix, in company with several others, was rather unsteady in his movements in going out of doors; but in the universal scrimmage of looking for horses and mounting, this may have been caused by excitement.

'How do you like my coat?' he said, with a watery smile. 'Isn't it a good shade? Oh, there are our horses. That's my new horse, the white one. O— come here. Charlie!'

Charlie was a white animal, with a highly-curved neck, a singular tail, and sleepy eyes. He looked as though the shafts of a cart would be no unfamiliar object to him.

'What do you think I gave for him?' he asked.

'Twenty-five pounds.'

'That's all *you* know about horses,' he said, contemptuously, as he struggled into the saddle.

At length the deer-cart, which had slowly come along the road, was driven through a gap in the hedge into the meadow fronting Wheatear's house; and immediately thereafter a dense stream of horsemen poured through the same passage. The latter arranged themselves in two irregular rows, stretching across the whole breadth of the meadow, and waited to see the stag turned out of that cumbersome, prison-van-looking vehicle. We heard the heavy gates being swung open, and presently a timid little light-grey creature leaped gently out, and, turning completely round, first looked quietly into the cart, and then calmly regarded us.

'There he is! there he is!' shouted everybody.

'Where?' where?' cried Felix, gazing wildly around.

'There, in front of you,' I said to him.

'That's a donkey,' said he, peering with half-shut eyes, 'that isn't a stag.'

'It's all the stag you'll get, sir,' said his neighbour on the other side, apparently offended by Felix's contemptuous observations.

'Where are his horns, then?'

The man turned away his head. He evidently thought that a person who asked for the sawn-off antlers of a stag was not worthy of an answer.

Meanwhile the pretty little animal which was the object of so much attention turned his head away from us, and took a peep at the long line of carriages and people on the road. Then he looked at the other side of the meadow, which was bounded by a row of trees; and finally, having made up his mind to quit this brilliant company, he composedly trotted away westward. Lightly and gracefully he hopped over the first hurdle, with a fine artistic absence of effort, and continued his course. The second hurdle was passed in the same manner, and then he broke into a little canter. Suddenly he stopped and turned round.

'He's waiting to give the dogs a chance,' said one.

'He's wondering why we don't follow,' said another.

The crowd roared and cheered, some out of derision, others to hasten him on his course; and as he heard this unmusical bray of human voices he set off at a light gallop, and with a fine, high leap cleared a rather broad stream which crossed his path. We could now but catch glimpses of his grey fur shooting past avenues among the distant trees, appearing for a moment on high ground, and then dipping into some hollow, until he seemed to alter his line of route and go away to the south. At this moment a large number of renegades, wishing to shirk the hurdles and overtake the bounds by a cross-cut, retired from the meadow and took to the main road, which led pretty much in the direction the stag was supposed to have taken.

'Don't you think we should go with them?' said Felix to me, very timidly.

'But what would Mrs. Felix think of you?' I said.

'True,' he replied, rather mournfully; 'I had forgotten her.'

Then he burst into a somewhat forced laugh.

'What's a tumble, after all!' he cried.

'Oh, nothing.'

'Besides, Charlie is said to be a nice easy jumper—comes down with all his feet at once on the other side. I say, haven't these ten minutes expired yet? I don't consider it proper to give the deer so great a start; it is cruelty to the horses to put such a strain upon them.'

The ten minutes had just expired when the dogs were turned into the meadow. Almost immediately they hit off the scent, and, with a joyful cry, were across the field and clambering over the first hurdle, whither the two lines of horsemen straightway followed them. Felix cast one look in the direction of his wife and children, and, with his teeth set hard, pressed into the heart of the great, rushing, noisy throng that now went full tilt at the artificial fence. Over they went, one here

and there striking heavily on the top spar, two or three coming lightly to the ground, and about half a dozen undergoing the pleasant experience of a refusal, to the no small delight of the crowd. Among these last was Mr. Felix, whose sleepy-eyed animal had rushed straight at the hurdles, and, wheeling round, had severely bruised his rider's foot against the spars.

'At it again, old un!' shouted a lot of little boys, with that easy scorn incident to pedestrians when a horseman gets into trouble.

Mr. Felix, clenching his teeth still harder, did go at it again, riding fairly at the hurdles; then, just as his horse was about to swerve, he wrenched at his head and simply drove the beast through the spars, while he himself was seen the next moment to be perched ungracefully on the neck of the animal, which now stood with trembling legs among the splintered wood. Madened with rage, Felix struggled backward into the saddle, and cut into his horse fiercely with spur and whip. Fortunately, Mrs. Felix was posted near the second flight of hurdles, and there still remained a chance for her husband to distinguish himself before her eyes. How he did manage this second leap I had not an opportunity of seeing; but I was told afterwards that, to the great delight of Mrs. Felix, who nearly wept for joy, he rose well and cleared the jump gallantly at the first effort. It should be added, also, that my friend's triumph was enhanced by the fact that two or three horses, after repeated refusals, were withdrawn altogether from the contest by their disgusted riders.

The stag having taken a pretty straight course over some rather heavy country soon thinned the company of horsemen; and for a long time Mr. Felix was to be seen painfully toiling over the stiff fields with a large number of stragglers who had not yet given up. At the end of twenty minutes there were not above sixty out of the original two hundred who could be said to be with the hounds at all; and about that time I lost sight of Mr. Felix and his persevering comrades.

By-and-by it became evident that the stag had turned his head eastward; and 'By Jove!' cried some one, 'he must have gone straight through Tonbridge!' The surmise turned out to be correct; the deer, for once, taking to the road, had gone straight through a dense double line of carriages and nebulous horsemen, who, having tried to overtake the hunt by this near cut, had almost filled the main thoroughfare of the town. As the riders who had really followed the hounds now came cantering up, covered with perspiration and blowing like porpoises, the good villagers cheered them on their way, and shouted with derisive laughter after those who unblushingly joined them. Among the latter was a gentleman who had been quietly drinking a glass of ale in front of the 'Bull;' and no sooner did this person perceive me than he rode up to my side.

'You've a friend on a white horse?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Who sat next you at breakfast?'

'Yes,' I replied, with some alarm, fearing to hear of Mr. Felix's sudden death.

'Well,' he said, with a smile, 'he was with me a few minutes ago when the stag came up the street, and, in spite of all I could do, he started off in pursuit. He wouldn't wait for the hounds; he said they would overtake him in plenty of time. Has your friend been out before?'

'Not with the staghounds,' I said.

'I thought so,' he added, with a peculiar look, 'for I never saw a man so determined to have the chasing of the deer all to himself. He seems to consider hounds a nuisance.'

Mr. Felix, however, was soon forgotten in the universal clamour and hurry. The day was declared, with many an unnecessary ejaculation, to be the finest of the season, for the deer had never taken to the road except during his brief visit to Tonbridge, and the scent was good, and the hounds ran famously, and the field was again speedily thinned, so as to avoid the certainty of being ridden over, and everybody (who

could keep up with the pace) was jubilant with a strange and tingling joy. The course was singularly straight, leading almost in a direct line over garden-land and meadow, down into moist, deep glades and up the sides of trying hills, through park, and wood, and field and fallow, until we had returned to our starting-point, passed it, and were away far to the north. At length the hounds, running by the side of a house, led us down a valley, to get into which we had to ride along a narrow by-path. As we rounded the corner we saw that the main road led up and over the tall hill on the other side of the hollow; and on this road, a considerable distance ahead of the hounds, stood a man in a scarlet coat. He set up a joyful halloo upon seeing us, and, breaking through the hedge, proceeded to come down the steep incline at a pace dangerous for even an experienced rider.

'Why, that's your friend,' said the man who had formerly spoken to me; 'he is in luck's way to-day.'

The hounds had just time to pass when Felix arrived at the bottom of the hollow; and, as we came up, it was evident that this down-hill pace had been none of his making. His white horse had, on hearing the hounds, taken him away in spite of himself, and now went crash into a small hedge which the others were about to jump. The brute stuck there; but Felix, scarcely a second afterwards, found himself lying on the bank of a ditch on the other side of the hedge, his hat smashed, his whip gone, and scarcely power left within him to open his eyes.

'Give me some sherry,' he gasped, as I got down; 'I'm afraid this is my last jump.'

His face was deadly pale, and from the utterly helpless way in which he lay extended on the carpeting of matted primroses, wild hyacinths, and dandelions, I fancied that he had really injured himself internally.

'Tell my wife she's provided for,' he moaned, after having gulped down some sherry.

'Why, get up!' I said to him; 'you're not hurt, are you?'

'You'll look after my children; I know you will,' he said, faintly, shutting his eyes; 'and don't let Jack go out on the pony any more.'

'Where are you hurt?'

'All over,' he said, in a sort of ghastly whisper.

In order to inspire him with some sort of courage, I insisted that he could not be hurt, having fallen on this soft and opportune bank; and finally helped or dragged him to his feet despite his repeated moans. I persuaded him to use his limbs one by one, and made him confess that no bones were broken.

'But what are bones?' he said, plaintively; 'it isn't the breakage of bones that kills men, but injury to the lungs, or heart, or liver, or something. And I feel as if I was shaken to pieces inside.'

'Mr. Felix,' said I, 'you know how much I esteem you. At the same time I can't wait any longer, and cut off my chance of ever seeing the hounds again. If you get on your horse—he waits for you quietly enough—you will find yourself all right, and you may yet distinguish yourself.'

'No,' he said, shaking his head sadly; 'I have had enough for to-day. I shall have to ride home now; but if I find myself growing weak, I shall call at Graham's and stay there for the night.'

He mounted his horse in a melancholy manner, and very slowly and very carefully walked the animal up the hill down which he had come so rapidly. As he disappeared round the corner of the road, he waved his fingers with a frail hilarity, and I saw him no more.

But as it is the fortune of Mr. Felix with which we are chiefly concerned, it may be better to follow him and look at the stag-hunt from his point of view. The house in which he proposed, in case of feeling very ill, to pass the night, was about a dozen miles from the scene of his mishap; and by the time he had reached it the long solitary ride had greatly depressed his spirits. He resolved, at least, to enter and rest himself, leaving the question of his night's lodging for further consideration. Fortu-

nately Mr. Graham was at home; and in his friend's dining-room Mr. Felix, with the help of a little wine, began to feel himself again. Dusk was coming on; and our hero beguiled the lassitude of the afternoon by a history of his morning's adventure.

Suddenly a terrific crash was heard outside; a succession of shrill screams followed; and the next moment there was a pattering of hoofs across the lawn, and the noise of a falling tray in Mr. Graham's hall. The whole party started up and rushed to the window, where they beheld an awful scene of devastation. The glass frame-work of a fine conservatory was smashed to pieces, and lay in splinters and fragments upon the path, while trailing stems of vines, potted geraniums and azaleas, and innumerable green-house plants lay heaped together amid shreds of earthenware. Mrs. Graham was the first to dart to the door; and she had scarcely done so when, with a loud shriek, she tumbled back into the room.

'Oh, George!' she cried, 'there's —there's some *creature* in the hall!'

George, rushing to the door, and expecting to meet a vision of some horrible being with eyes of fire and cloven hoofs, found himself confronted by the very stag which Mr. Felix had vainly attempted to follow; while at the same moment there came the cry of the hounds which were now coursing along the garden-path. Mr. Graham's hall would soon have become a slaughter-house, had not the gardener, alarmed by the crash of the conservatory, come running forward from the outside, and at once comprehending the situation, darted to the hall-door and shut in the deer. But what to do with the frightened animal which was so encaged? Had it been a famished tiger at bay, the people in the house could not have been more alarmed; and for a time Mr. Felix and his friends contented themselves by peeping round the corner of the drawing-room door at the unfortunate beast, which stood panting and trembling by the side of the umbrella-stand. In time, however, the gardener came to the

rescue, and, with the assistance of a groom, threw a rope over the stag's head and secured him.

Such was the position of affairs when I again came in view of Mr. Felix, who now passed outside to meet the members of the hunt. He had taken care to put on his hat; and doubtless most of us fancied him a terrible fellow to have beaten the very hounds in the run.

'All right, gentlemen,' he said, blandly, 'he's safe and sound, and ready for another day as soon as you want him.'

But Mr. Graham, coming forward, and discovering who was the master of the hounds, began to make a grievous complaint about the demolition of his conservatory. He became quite angry. He vowed that no money could recompense him for the loss of rare plants he had sustained; and that, for the mere breakage of glass and so forth, five guineas were the least he would take.

'And unless I get the five guineas,' said he, 'you don't get your stag; that's all.'

Now the master did not happen to have any money at all with him; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he was enabled to gather by subscription the sum of *4l. 10s.*

'I don't believe the whole place is worth five pounds,' said the master, with a great oath; 'but here, sir, as you bring your shop with you from London down into the country, I'll give you *4l. 10s.* for the article, and if you're not satisfied——'

'Then I shall be responsible for the rest,' observed Mr. Felix, with a grand air.

As we rode off to the nearest inn to order some dinner, Mr. Felix came to me, and said, coaxingly—

'You'll come home with me and stay over the night at our place? And, you know, you needn't say anything to Mrs. Felix about my being in the house when the deer was taken. Let her suppose I rode all the way with the hounds—she will like it, I know. Women do feel gratified by such trifles; and what's the harm of a little bit of innocent deception?'

W. B.





Drawn by T. S. Beccombe.]

SMOTHERED IN ROSES.

[See Page 511.]

SMOTHERED IN ROSES.

YES; charity, I know, may hide
 A multitude of sins;
 But there's a proverb to decide
 Where charity begins.
 Should *mine* in future contemplate
 A journey anywhere,
 'Twill be a ball—a play—a fête—
 And not a Fancy Fair.

The girls are all so very bold—
 The men so very rash—
 So many trifles *must* be sold,
 And all for ready cash.
 You'll find, when once you come to count
 The guineas here and there,
 It costs a pretty large amount
 To see a Fancy Fair.

Three-quarters of the things they sell
 Are not a bit of good—
 (One can't refuse, though, very well,
 And wouldn't, if one could).
 They have such voices and such curls,
 And such a winning air—
 About a dozen pretty girls
 May work a Fancy Fair.

They hunt a fellow round and round,
 They track him up and down;
 They sell him portraits at a pound,
 And roses at a crown;
 Scent, purses, pocket-books, and rings—
 Pomatum for the hair—
 And fifty other little things
 That stock a Fancy Fair.

I'm not particularly shy,
 As everybody knows,—
 And yet I am obliged to buy
 Whatever they propose.
 I've been so often overcome,
 That now I only dare
 To take a very modest sum
 To any Fancy Fair.

They little know, or little feel
 What injuries they do:
 A wound upon the purse may heal,
 But hearts are wounded too.
 This damage done by lips and eyes
 Is more than I can bear;
 So, charity, take any guise
 Except a Fancy Fair.

H. S. LONG.

WHAT'S IN THE PAPERS ?

(ILLUSTRATED BY THE LATE C. H. BENNETT.)

WELL, as far as matters of intense personal interest are concerned, it entirely depends upon your own peculiar hobby; but, if you are merely anxious to learn the contents of 'The Times,' 'Daily Telegraph,' 'Standard,' or 'Morning Star,' as a matter of statistics in journalism, I can sum them up and give you the result in a twinkling. Leading articles, reports, critiques; intelligence on military, naval, sporting, and mercantile matters; foreign correspondence, advertisements, and *padding*. If you can find nothing whatever to amuse you in any of these departments, you may just as well give up the study of newspapers for ever, and stick to the perusal of fiction for the remainder of your days. I am fully convinced, for my own part, that a belief in reality is fatal to the exercise of the fancy: I only put my faith in things that cannot by any possibility be proved, and I am consequently looked upon (by people who don't know any better) as an ethereal dreamer—a creature of wild imaginings—a being of infinite aspirations; as anything, in short, rather than a practical and well-conducted young person. It is not, however, the wish of most people to imitate Lord Byron, and wear an enormous amount of back hair. The present age believes in its own doings considerably, and likes to see how it gets along; hence the enormous demand for newspapers.

I always make a point of reading my own particular organ of opinion in bed; and, having perused it through and through very carefully, I throw it down and give myself up to a luxurious criticism on all that it contains. Facts are not much in my line, as I have already stated; but Society demands that one should know something of what goes on in the world; and I desire to keep well with Society. To-night, perhaps—during the intervals of the mazy waltz or the maddening galop—I shall find myself in want

of a subject on which to breathe soft nothings to my delightful partner. I shall probably dine this evening in the most intellectual company, and I wish to be particularly terse and epigrammatic on current events. The newspaper obviously supplies me with materials for the exhibition of my conversational acquirements; and I am enabled, by perusing it in bed, fully to digest its varied contents. The body's repose is propitious to the mind's exertion; and I have long ago discovered that my brain is never so active as when reclining on my downy pillow. Try to read a paper during breakfast, in the train, or on the omnibus: you cannot concentrate your intellect upon the task. It is merely one duty amongst the many that you have to perform during the day. Peruse it in bed, and it becomes your sole occupation—the only interval between rest and labour,—the neutral ground that separates dreaming from doing. Never tell me that you cannot afford the time for it. Let the servant wake you half an hour before you mean to rise.

The readers of a newspaper are as various in their choice of topics as the topics themselves. Nothing is too heavy for some of them, and nothing too light for others. There are people in this world, I believe, who take a fervid interest in the precise time of high water at London Bridge; yet high water and low are matters of profound indifference to most of us. The general reader cares very little about ships that have arrived and ships that have sailed; yet the departure of every ship makes a good many people very anxious, and the arrival of every ship makes a good many people very happy. The advertisements that begin with 'Wanted' have never created much interest in the bosom of your humble servant; yet they are devoured with considerable eagerness by poor folks out of employment. It is not at all



drawn by the late C. H. Bennett.

WHAT'S IN THE PAPERS?

a common thing for the reader of a newspaper to occupy the centre of indifference on *every* subject contained in it.

We all profess to entertain strong opinions on the question of politics now-a-days; and those who cultivate the most moderate principles appear to be the most outrageous in their talk. I always fight extremely shy of a man who tells me that he is a Liberal-Conservative, because I feel certain that he intends to get upon his hind legs and argue. He reminds me of Mr. Facing-both-ways, in the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' I like a stanch Conservative, and I love an enthusiastic Liberal. Only let a man be black or white; this whitey-brown school of politics is more than I can bear. The number of respectable householders in London who firmly believe that the British Empire would go to smithereens unless they had frequent opportunities of stating their private impressions respecting its government must be something absolutely enormous. They deliver themselves of their pet theories on all possible occasions, and very often learn a considerable portion of the previous night's Parliamentary debates by heart. The conduct of Lord Stanley in the 'Tornado' business, and the behaviour of Mr. Walpole respecting the demonstration in Hyde Park, must have set folks disputing in very nearly every coffee-room and eating-house in town. The newspaper, student who reads politics for their own sake, generally contrives to make himself thoroughly master of his facts. His deductions, I need scarcely tell you, are occasionally erroneous; but the opponent who rashly attempts to confute his logic is generally suffering from a loose screw in his own statements. When one party in an argument can only *remember*, and the other can only *reason*, a considerable amount of precious time is likely to be lost in talk.

The gentleman who pays the Fine Arts the graceful compliment of cultivating about a couple of them to a modest extent, gives his first glance to the critiques. The Royal Academy, and the French and Flemish Exhibition are absorbing

topics for him; he is quite capable of forming his own opinion on pictures, but he is nevertheless rather anxious to discover what the verdict of a professional critic may happen to be. He likes to find himself supported by authority, and so he studies the daily papers as well as the weekly reviews. He welcomes with joy the latest news regarding operas and concerts. The notices of new plays have a singular fascination for him, whether he believes or not in the decline of the drama. It gives him huge gratification to be told that Miss T. performed with her usual tenderness and grace in the three-act comedy produced somewhere last night, or that Miss F. was the life and soul of Mr. Somebody's latest burlesque. He is perhaps acquainted personally with a popular actor—in which case he possesses a strong qualification for becoming a consummate bore, both amongst those who are acquainted with *several* popular actors, and amongst those who are acquainted with none at all. Whenever his friend happens to be spoken well of in the papers he announces the fact with immense triumph in every circle that he pervades, to the unbounded joy of his listeners. He succeeds now and then in picking up very small pieces of green-room gossip. A certain actress is going to be married; or a certain actor appears before the public under an assumed name (his proper one being Smith or Jones, probably); and these infinitesimal scandals are whispered about with every demonstration of profound sagacity, until their garrulous chronicler has gradually come to be looked upon by the weak-minded as an oracle in dramatic affairs. His interest in the papers is greatly heightened by his knowledge of the names of the critics. If you are ever unlucky enough to go to the theatre in his company on the first night of a new piece, he will point you out 'The Times,' 'Telegraph,' and 'Star,' very knowingly.

The mercantile gentleman turns at once to the money article of his favourite organ. He is an eminently practical man, sir, and has been occupied during several years of his

life in trying to spell some pretty word out of the three letters L, S, and D. He reads his paper in an omnibus or a railway carriage (first class) on his way to his place of business. The E.C. postal district is to him a garden in which he gathers money all the day, like a busy bee. Politics interest him inasmuch as they influence the funds. He is at present a Conservative, if anything: in the days of his clerkship, a long time ago, his tendency was towards the most pronounced Radicalism. On seventy or eighty pounds per annum, one *must* be a Radical, you see; Conservative principles cannot be nourished at the price. Except the City intelligence, there is very little in the paper to amuse our commercial friend; but he glances at the police reports when he gets to his chop-house, in the middle of the day, because reading is favourable to the process of digestion. He likes to hear about fraudulent bankrupts; and a good big forgery is meat and drink to him for several days.

To the lounge, *pur et simple*, the most seductive portion of a daily paper is its *padding*. This is the technical word made use of to describe those little scraps of general information, and odds and ends which are introduced at the foot of a column in order to fill it up. They are almost endless in their variety; and some such headings as the following may generally be looked for amongst them:—

Singular Discovery of Human Remains in a Chalk Pit.

The Bombay Mails.

Daring Robbery in the South of France.

Progress of the Metropolitan Improvements.

Fatal Termination to a Practical Joke.

Remarkable Atmospheric Phenomenon in Devonshire.

These entertaining morsels very often go the round of the London papers, and end by going out starring in the provinces. They are exceedingly useful as topics for small-talk; and I should advise all diners-out who feel their intellects insufficient for grappling with questions of importance to devote a considerable quantity of their spare time to the study of padding. Plenty of amusement can also be obtained from the perusal of those mysterious advertisements which entreat somebody to return to his disconsolate wife, or treat of 'an elderly man who left his home last week in a blue coat with brass buttons, a wide-awake hat, and a pair of patent-leather boots. He was last seen at the British Museum, and is supposed to be insane.' It is interesting, too, to know that 'X received the 5*l.*, and will be happy to hear from Z. again;' or that some incurable maniac has been sending money to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on account of unpaid income-tax. The cynic will find food for conversation in the announcement headed, 'Wanted a Governess.' The immense prices given for education just now are amongst the most encouraging signs of the times.

But it is quite impossible to exhaust the types of people who take delight in the newspaper—from the Minister of the Crown who is anxious to see whether his oration of last night in Parliament is correctly reported, to the sympathetic burglar who desires to know how his bosom friend conducted himself yesterday before the Bow Street 'beak.' I have only tried to sketch three or four of the most earnest readers, and I must leave you to exercise your own powers of observation upon the rest.

H. S. L.



EXPERIENCES ON DARTMOOR.

THE other day I saw in a magazine the narrative of a chivalrous gentleman who, one fine afternoon, walked straight across Dartmoor, and forthwith worked up his adventures into an article of fifteen pages. I was not surprised to hear that narrative rather severely criticized, when I have been out on the moor; and I am bound to say that Dartmoor can hardly be appreciated or understood by a single peregrination. I have been there on various occasions, and, so far as we may venture to speak of future plans, I intend to go on various occasions more. I will venture to give some of my experiences, so far as they have gone, premising that, whatever they may be worth, they are *bonâ fide*, and acquired with some little cost and care, and I will take them in their order.

A large proportion of my readers must have travelled upon the South Devon Railway. Hardly any line of rail presents the traveller with scenes of such variety and beauty. When you have left Exminster behind you the estuary Exe broadens into a wide arm of the sea on the left, and on the right you have Powderham Castle and the broad park of the Earl of Devon. A little further on, the line directly skirts the shore. Looking out of the window on the left, you might fancy yourself on the railway to Venice, or on the railway across Morecombe Bay. You presently come to a fine house, to which a curious story belongs. There was a gentleman who, irritated beyond expression by railway expansion, sought out a secluded glade in Devonshire near the pretty little village of Dawlish. But this remorseless line cut straight between his windows and the sea, and Dawlish expanded into a fashionable watering-place; and the tragic story, firmly believed in the neighbourhood, is, that the gentleman died of a broken heart. You take leave of the sea before you arrive at Newton Junction, but between Newton and Plymouth you pass through some very pretty country.

You will not fail to be particularly impressed by the viaduct of perilous altitude which spans the deep glen of Ivybridge. As I surveyed the mass of green foliage below, with the shady walks cut between, and saw the silvery gleam of the stream rushing downwards to the mill, I thought that the scene fully realized all that I had heard of Devonian beauty, and I registered an intention of making it a visit one of these days. Here I was told the line had really reached Dartmoor, and it skirted, like a terrace, at a considerable elevation, the high moorland region. The wild, barren moor is everywhere girdled by a region of peculiar beauty, and the deep, romantic valley, spanned by the viaduct, is one of its outposts, and may be claimed as belonging to the moor itself.

I subsequently made a visit to Ivybridge from Plymouth, which is chiefly memorable to me as forming the beginning of my experiences on Dartmoor. The glen was every whit as beautiful on a more thorough acquaintance as when I contemplated it from the railway. It is curious to contemplate the railway from the glen, which seems suspended between the heaven and the earth on so airy a height and so narrow a causeway that it is almost a wonder that the fierce moorland wind has not blown it away. The impetuous stream, I discovered, was called the Erme, and the name of Ivybridge is from an old bridge that spans it, once embowered in ivy, and remarkable as being situated in four parishes. There is quite a little town here, and some considerable paper-mills, both of which you are glad to leave behind you to explore the glen of the Erme. It was a still summer evening, and beyond encountering a single pair of lovers, I was entirely solitary in the woods. There were some lovely walks cut out, the same that arrested my longing gaze from the stuffy railway carriage, and it was a constant amusement to try and ford the Erme by the rocks and

stones against which its current is constantly chafing. Near the village the glen is laid out almost with the regularity of a park, but as you explore the river it gradually loses this character. It became lonely and romantic, wild and pathless. You find dwarfed oak trees clustered with golden moss on the rocky slopes, and on one side of the stream there is a dreary hill 'the haunt of a lazy echo.' You come to ancient rings of stones and granite tors, and are soon out on the wild moor. I have been vehemently urged to perform the journey between Princeton and Ivybridge, and I verily believe that this is the proper thing to do. But I approached Princeton on another occasion and in a different way.

I must, however, first record a preliminary failure. I became a member of a local association which was a kind of British Association on a reduced scale. It had a meeting at Tavistock, where Earl Russell read the inaugural address, and the society broke itself up into alphabetical sections, ate, drank, and speechified, and finally proposed to send out an exploring party to investigate a district of the moor. But the weather was unpropitious, and the association only attended to such parts of its programme as could be transacted within doors. Undaunted by this failure, a week or two later I attempted an exploration single-handed. I now believe, though I did not think of it at the time, that I incurred some little risk.

I loitered on the bridge over the Tavy at Tavistock, admiring the sparkling and shadowed river, which here forms a cascade and skirts the old Abbey walk. It was four or five o'clock in a September afternoon, and I calculated that I could easily walk from Tavistock to Princetown. I was unacquainted with the difficult character of the road, and had also left out of the calculation that I had been wandering for miles that morning among the lawns and groves of Endsleigh, and had also had a long drive, and so my powers of endurance had already been rather heavily taxed. I started, however, with good courage,

through the pleasant countryside on the east of Tavistock. Gradually the cultivated ground faded off into the moorland. On one side of the road cultivation was pushed further than on the other; but agricultural efforts became sparse, less and less satisfactory, and presently ceased. I felt fatigued; and the few specimens of giganity which I encountered were travelling in a direction contrary to my own. The road was good, however. I felt also the invigorating effects of Dartmoor air and water. Wonderful air and water! I had no notion that these common blessings could attain to so rare a quality. As for the air, they say that no one brought up in Dartmoor air was ever known to die of a consumption; and the water more than rivalled my favourite draughts at Loch Katrine. A canopy of misty cloud was over me; but below and beyond the cloud I saw in the distance the red sunlight illuming the villas and meadows of Tavistock. I came presently to a rude little wayside hostel, where it was grateful to rest for a few minutes. A few minutes was all that I could allow myself, for I must not be benighted on the moor. As I left the lonely inn, a person who may be conventionally described as a 'rough-looking customer' volunteered his company, and I, not being proud, consented. It is quite upon my conscience that I have not shown a proper sense of gratitude to that 'rough-looking customer.' He combined, I discovered, the professional character of a mason, with the Bohemian tastes of a tramp. He had tramped, he told me, from Penzance to London, and he evinced a very keen sense of the varied character of the scenery which he had traversed. But he especially interested me with his account of the road over which we were passing; and, so far as I have been able to test his statements, I have found them perfectly correct.

'It was a dangerous road,' he said. The straight path and the firm road—so different from the average Devonshire lane, which is as dirty as it is picturesque,—hardly seemed to confirm the assertion.

'Only a twelvemonth ago, on an evening as might be this, only darker, later, and dirtier, a school-master of Princetown, who knew every inch of the way, fell down, baffled and exhausted, and died where he fell. There were some strong soldiers too, who came down from Plymouth, and made sure that they could march all night. They were overwhelmed in a snow-drift and perished. It was in the winter that all the horrible things happened; and there was scarcely ever a winter without them. In the summer, if you were lost on the moor, it was but to lie down and sleep till morning. He had done so several times, and had been nothing the worse for it.' We hinted to the friendly tramp that he had probably been the worse for liquor. Friendly tramp, in a burst of confidence, admitted that this had been the case. He remembered, a number of years ago, seeing a very affecting sight at that little inn. 'It was a dreary winter, and the snow lay deep on the ground, and the roads were simply impassable. The man who had the government contract for meat to supply Dartmoor prison found himself unable to deliver the stores. He asked the governor whether, if he could bring them as far as this wayside inn, the governor would let a detachment of convicts meet him at the inn and convey the provisions to the prison. The governor consented; and at the appointed time about a dozen convicts were there under a guard. 'They set about their work uncommon well. Well, sir, he was a good-natured chap, that butcher, and he asked the governor whether he might give the fellows some liquor, as they were working so hard and the weather was so bitter. Perhaps it was what had never happened before, but the governor said that they might have half-a-pint of beer apiece. Lor, sir! it would have done your heart good to have seen the poor fellows over their beer. Some of them hadn't seen such a thing for many a long year. You should just have seen how they tasted it, and lingered over it, and made quite a piece of business with

the half-pint. Big blackguards them convicts, sir. But there was a sad business only last night. A poor woman came all the way from Liverpool to see her husband; and when she came she found that only a few days before he had been drafted off into some other convict establishment. She was liked to have gone straight off. They comforted her up a bit, and there was a sum of money subscribed for her. You may see the convicts anywhere almost working about the roads. Sometimes they escape; but there's very little chance for them. They are lost upon the moor, and haven't a notion what to do with themselves. Besides, I'm told that there's a tower within the prison, where constantly there's one or two men watching all the country round to see if there's any escape attempted. And what would the poor fellows do in a wild country like this? They wouldn't know where to go to. They've wandered about until they have surrendered to the first child or old man who would take them. There's a good reward offered by government for any escaped convict, and any one would be glad to earn it. The only chance the poor fellows have is to get to some garden where clothes are hanging out, and manage to steal something that will conceal the yellow clothes.' He proceeded to complain that the convicts had less labour and better fare than labourers, and were allowed to leave off work and go under sheds if it rained. Here, however, my tramping friend was guilty of an anachronism. The too good diet was very much the case a few years ago; but since then alterations have been made which go, I think, into the other extreme. When I asked next Sunday evening what the convicts had had during the day, I was told that it had only been bread and water, and a little cheese. As for the consideration shown them in bad weather, which I did not hear much of afterwards, it is to be recollected that Dartmoor is a sanatorium for invalid prisoners, many of them chest-cases, and it would not do to expose them to what might be a real peril. My friend told me a

marvellous story which exactly repeated Hogarth's Two Apprentices:—Two young fellows had been workmen together, and lived in the same room. They separated, and, after the lapse of years, they met again; one of them as the governor of the prison, and the other as one of the convicts within its walls. More probable were cases of which he told me where convicts, within a very short time after their release, had been brought back again, wholly bent upon denying their identity. That is not so easily done, as there is a regular photographic institution at the prison, and each convict has his portrait taken twice, of which one copy is left in the prison, and the other is sent to the locality where the released criminal is supposed to be about to proceed.

Thus, with various discourse, we beguiled the way. The last hues of sunset vanished much earlier than I had calculated; a heavy mist came down. My companion proposed a short cut, to which, not without trepidation, I consented, but which brought us all right. It was quite dark before we entered Princetown, so dark, indeed, that one could hardly see the way; most easy would it have been for any traveller to miss the high road. When we got to the inn I requested my friend to take his beer into the tap-room to my score; but on looking back on that dark evening, the heavy mist, the unknown path, my state of thorough fatigue, I wonder very much what I should have done without his friendly aid, and am by no means sure that I did not incur some risk. I wish I had asked that fellow to have had some supper, and given him something hot, and cultivated his better acquaintance. But, singularly enough, I believed it occurred to neither of us at the time that anything more had happened than casual companionship on a dark, tiring road.

At my hostel I found my carpet bag, which had gone on a day before, and which contained my 'Murray.' I found that Murray had got quite a sensation sentence about Prince's Town. 'It is situated at least 1400 feet above the level of the

sea, at the foot of N. Hessay Tor (alt. 1730 feet), and is surrounded on all sides by the moor, which comes in unbroken wildness to the very door of the inn. With such dismal scenery the hotel is in keeping; its granite walls are grim and cheerless, but the windows command an imposing sweep of the waste, and this will be an attraction to many travellers. It is truly impressive to gaze upon this desolate region when the wind is howling through the lonely village and the moon fitfully shining.' I am bound to say that, however cheerless the exterior, within doors things were particularly bright and cheerful, and my account for the four days I sojourned there quite moderate. It was certainly a drawback that the rain came down with such sullen pertinacity; but being of a cheerful, hopeful temperament, with a strong leaning towards optimism, I found consoling thoughts. A great lady who visited Rome in the summer told me that it was a great thing to see Italy in its own climate; so I suppose it was a great thing to see Dartmoor in its proper climate.

There is, perhaps, much to be said in favour of the theory of seeing Dartmoor weather. I had not the moral courage to venture out into mist and tempest; but mist and tempest once or twice overtook me in my rambles. There is something very weird and solemn in a Dartmoor mist. You feel yourself draped in its sombre folds; the impalpable seems to grow palpable; every near object looms larger than human; the fens expand into gigantic masses; a stray sheep almost assumes elephantine proportions. These thick mists are formed by the condensation of the Atlantic vapours on the chilly heights. If you are really lost, it is best to listen for the hoarse roar of some stream. When you have found your way to some torrent, it is your best chance of safety to follow the downward course till you come to some habitation of man. The rivers themselves are often sources of danger. There is a moorland rhyme—

'River of Dart, river of Dart,
Every year thou claimest a heart.'

Every year some one is drowned in the river, adding to the number of men who have been lost on Dartmoor. They say that the Dart almost gives an intelligible human 'cry.' It has an awful sound in the stillness. 'Dart came down last night,' is a common expression of the moorsmen, when there has been a swollen stream and sudden inundation. There is something very sturdy and independent in the character of the moorsmen. Mounted on their sturdy Dartmoor ponies, fleet and strong beyond all comparison with their size, the men and their animals harmonise very well together, and afford a picture of primitive manners of which the counterpart is not often to be found. I was talking to one of them by the side of the Teign, and he told me that his home was close by the source of the river, and he could cover with his hat the bubbling spring from which it flowed. To those who know Teignmouth and Dartmouth, the Teign and Dart of the moors, lucid streams transparently covering their bed, give a striking contrast; here a bubbling fountain, and there a mighty estuary where a navy may ride in security. The fertility and loveliness of South Devon are materially owing to this rugged background of Dartmoor. These garden shores, smiling meads, and bowery hollows are due to the elevated granite masses which shield them from the northern blast; and on Dartmoor some fifty or sixty streams take their rise, many of which lose themselves in the Channel, and scatter beauty and plenty on their course.

I thus approached Dartmoor on its western side, varying my route by returning over the wild road that leads from Princeton to Horrabridge. On my next expedition I approached it on the eastern side. I made it from Chagford. Here Sidney Godolphin was killed in the civil wars, 'leaving,' says Lord Clarendon, 'the misfortune of his death upon a place which could never otherwise have had a mention in the world.' Chagford, however, is very well known, a favourite and even a fashionable place of residence in the

summer to those who want to 'do' the moor country. 'In winter,' writes a visitor, 'Chagford is desolate and almost unapproachable; and if an inhabitant be asked at this season concerning his locality, he calls it, in sad tones, "Chagford, good Lord." In summer it is picturesque and accessible, and then the exulting designation is "Chagford, and what d'ye think?"' There is another place which is called 'Widdecombe in the Dartmoors,' or 'Widdecombe in the cold country, good Lord.' In Widdecombe Church, the tower of which may be compared with the famous tower of Magdalen College, is an inscription recording a terrible storm which happened two hundred years ago, when a ball of fire dashed through a window into the midst of the congregation, killing a few people and wounding scores more. If you come from London you should approach the moor by way of Fingle Bridge and the gorge of the Teign. Properly speaking, this wonderful bit of Swiss scenery, for such it really is, beyond any other in the west of England, does not belong to Dartmoor, unless indeed, which there is no authority for asserting, it once belonged to the moor before so much of it was reclaimed. The bridge serves to centralize the scenery; a very pretty bridge over a rapid brawling stream, on either side of which rise most precipitous hills. There is a mountain path along the heights, over which the racing breezes are always coursing, which gives perhaps the most wonderful walk of two miles with which I am acquainted in the west of England. I considerably astonished some people in the neighbourhood by stating, on the authority of the very learned Roman history published by the Chaplain to the House of Commons, that the camps on the opposing mountains marked the last conflicts between the Romans and the native Damnonii, and it was somewhere about here that Titus saved the life of his father, Vespasian. It was very curious to them, thus bringing Titus and Vespasian into connection with the localities in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor



Drawn by Fane Wood.]

STILL UNMARRIED!

(See the Story.)

I must say of these localities that the scenery of many of them is more varied and striking than that of Dartmoor itself. You may linger on at Chagford for many days, scouring the surrounding country. Wonderfully pretty is the river Teign about a mile from Chagford, unreserved and with wonderful trout-fishing. I met in February a man with rod and line, and I am afraid to mention the vast number of trout which he had caught in a very few hours. You should secure the services of Mr. Perrot, who is the best guide for Dartmoor. You would not wish for better accommodation than the Three Crowns at Chagford: and in the visitors' book I read quite a little essay on Chagford Church, by Charles Kingsley, and noted among many interesting names that of A. H. Clough.

At Dartmoor you may hear stories of fairies and pixies, stories of robbers and outlaws, stories of bards and druids. There is a learned literature on Dartmoor subjects which is really of considerable importance. There are papers and

transactions of the Archæological Society and the Geological Society. Mrs. Bray has given nearly all the first volume of her 'Devonshire Legends' to these subjects; there is a poem on Dartmoor by Carrington, which you don't appreciate very much in your own room, but appreciate mightily on the moor; and a most worthy clergyman at Crediton wrote a 'Perambulation of Dartmoor,' which will always be a standard volume on the subject. The Druidical remains are the most perplexed and important subjects, as interesting in their way as those of Avebury and Stonehenge. But the moor itself will be your best teacher. Only leave the three or four roads which intersect it, and in remote glen or gorge, by misty tor or rushing stream, stretched on velvet moss by the side of the golden furze, which made Linnæus fall down on his knees and thank God for making so beautiful a thing, you may reascend the stream of time, and surround yourself with the unchanged sights which once belonged to Druidical Britain.

STILL UNMARRIED.

A GLORIOUS September evening in Scotland.

Tall hills dipt in purple gloom, and from behind their massive lines the dazzling light of sunset.

Gold—red amber—with sharp-cut lines of crimson cloudlet.

Far below, in the narrow valley, a pearl-white tarn, set in a ring of dark fir trees. Above the little lake shelving steep banks, broken, and birch clad, leading up to the terrace patchwork of flowers—scarlet, gold, and green and to the velvet lawn all aglow in the sunshine.

Even the grim walls of the castle wore a poetic pallor over the streaky whitewash of their unsymmetrical outline, and the small, unkindly windows were transfigured by the diamond blaze with which they answered the evening sun. The shadow lay all across the lawn, by the great lime trees and the grand silver fir. To the right, and where

the light met the shade, a bright line of colour—blue, red, and buff. Shawls and cushions tossed into heaps, and two pretty women, half reclining on them, in pale gauzy dresses.

Blanche Eversley, the fairer of the two, was one of those women whom men worship, and women (those who are not jealous) call a 'darling.'

She gave you the idea of being 'little.' She had coaxing ways, and never bored you. She flirted a good deal, and was devoted to Jack, her husband. She dressed charmingly, but an imitation of her generally proved a failure; for the beads, trinkets, bits of lace, and *agaceries* innumerable that she wore, looked tawdry on any other, while they fitted her provoking, delicate style of prettiness and perfection.

She was given to friendship, and the object of to-day was her companion, Georgiana Filmer, a young

lady of some four years her senior, but whom the little matron was chaperoning at Castle Gloom, with the avowed intention of making a match between her and Frank Fraser, their host.

It is impossible to describe Georgie Filmer.

She was beautiful; because when you had been under the influence of her eyes and voice for a day, you said to yourself she was beautiful, but you could not describe her. She had brown hair that was sometimes fair, sometimes dark; she was tall and graceful; and Frank Fraser was as much in love with her as heart could wish.

"'Tirra Litra on the River."

When will these good people come home and let us have tea?" said Blanche, plucking the daisies and throwing them about idly. "I am so fond of that poem, but I never can make out what it means, can you?"

"She was bored, poor dear woman—small blame to her—with that everlasting spinning; and then somebody came, and she—. By-the-by, what *did* she do? I forget."

"So do I; only I know it is all very sad and pretty."

"The best of all receipts for making one do evil deeds—"to be bored." What terrible moments the author must have undergone before he could describe it so well—do you recollect, in "Mariana?" Only he should have said it was a seaside lodging-house, with a horsehair sofa, and a smell of dinner, to make the situation perfect."

"Ah! to be sure," replied Blanche; "only I don't know "Mariana." I never can remember things, at least only certain ones. It is all practice, I believe. Wonderful how vividly some little things stick in one's memory," she added, after a pause.

Blanche sighed, and tried to recollect something trivial, yet terrible, that should stick ever in her memory, but for the life of her she could recall nothing but what was perfectly bright and pleasant, and so only looked pensive, for the sake of appearances.

"Don't you think we might ensnare Sandy into giving us tea out

here?" Georgie said, presently; "or would the Blake's wrath be too great?"

"I don't care if she is angry. Georgie darling; when you are Mrs. Frank, I trust you will do away with Lady Blake. I know he hates her, and to my mind she is the greatest nuisance alive, except her daughter. How nice it will be, dear, when it is all settled! I will come and see you every year, and you shall stay with me in London. Just fancy, how delicious! I do wish you would let him say his little speech soon, dear. I see him composing it all day long, and then you shut him up when he is just ready."

"Far better for him not to say it at all, my dear," Georgie replied.

Lady Blanche sat up, and was quite red and energetic. "Georgie, you *must*—you *said* you would. Dear Gee, you really will not refuse him after all. I shall be too angry; and, dear, you don't know how I wish it; and Jack—Jack wishes it, too, he says, and we both think it will be so very, very—. How! it will—."

"Ah—yes—I understand; it will improve me, and bring out my good qualities. I am perfectly happy with my present bad lot. I should not know what to do with good ones. I should have to put on my Sunday gown for them every day of the week. Of course I shall accept him. Lady Blake says a woman will marry *anything* after she is five-and-twenty, and I am about a hundred. I only pity him, poor dear! You see, Blanche, matrimony shows itself to you in a pink light. You are young. The universe is a mirror that reflects only your Jack. It is all tuned to the pitch of his fiddle—violin, I mean. That is all quite natural and charming. Jack's moustache is a poem in itself, and he plays like an angel. But with me it is different. I am too old for grand passions. Frank's whiskers are too curly; he is too plump to inspire one. He is made to be bullied by women. I want someone to bully *me*, I think. A master—not a slave."

Lady Blanche held her tongue, being shrewd enough to detect

spinster inexperience in the latter clause of her friend's speech.

The argument was not recommenced. Footsteps on the gravel announced the rest of the party—three ladies in stout boots, linsey gowns, and the air of self-satisfaction that always pervades the conscientious takers of exercise after a long walk.

There is a certain class of young ladies to be met with in every country house, be the party great or small.

Not specially pretty, not specially young, not specially well dressed, but tidy, very. Generally short and slim, with smooth dark hair, good feet, and very strong boots.

They are good-natured, but capable of taking good care of themselves.

Very pleasant to talk to, but not dangerously fascinating. They do bead work; they have good teeth; and flirt with any disengaged object, but never attempt rivalry or inspire jealousy.

They waltz with the tallest men at the county ball, and are apt to marry officers, or well-to-do parsons; and, for the rest, they make capital wives.

Of this class or type Julia Gort was a perfect specimen. She was Lucy Blake's friend, and had come to Castle Gloom with her and her mother, and she was as cheery as a bird, even after the tallest of the Berties had deliberately abandoned her colours on the arrival of Blanche Eversely. Lucy Blake confided her religious opinions, and made her play the bass of her duets. Miss Blake was devoted to Mendelssohn, as she told you shortly after you were introduced; and she required of every one, before bestowing on them her good opinion, or, indeed, her smallest consideration, that they should 'appreciate the classical composers,' and prefer Mozart to Meyerbeer, Weber to Verdi.

She was excellent, and slightly obstinate; had solemn blue eyes, reddish hands, and a quantity of hair which she scorned to dress in any but the plainest fashion, and she was really and truly in love with Frank Fraser. Lady Blake was like

the dame in the epitaph, 'bland, passionate, and deeply religious.' She had large features, and was (erroneously) supposed to have been handsome in her youth, in consequence of which she wore high top-knots by night, and wonderful bonnets by day.

She exhausted herself in trying to believe, and make other people believe, that she was a clever woman, and she really *did* think she was logical.

She had faith in long walks, goloshes, early rising, and her own opinions, and she made worse tea than any one in the kingdom; but she was really kind hearted, and capable of unselfish acts, with, however, a sense of appreciation of such acts in herself as diminished their grace.

'Had such a delightful walk,' they exclaimed in chorus.

'How horribly tired you must be,' was the unsympathetic rejoinder.

Miss Gort added that the gentlemen were just behind them, to which fact a banging of guns close to the castle bore testimony.

'Who was that tall man that walked with Mr. Bertie?' Lady Blake asked of her mother: 'one of the Grants?'

'No; I did not know his face. He is too tall for a Gordon. He might be a keeper.'

'Oh, mamma! Oh, Lady Blake! He was not a keeper; he has come back with the others, besides. He must be some new guest.'

'Impossible,' said Lady Blake. 'Frank would scarcely have failed in *savoir faire* so completely as to omit telling me, his aunt, if he had invited more people.'

Miss Gort looked sorry for having spoken; and Miss Filmer, taking no interest in the matter, got up from her cushions and dawdled towards the castle, whither the others followed her almost directly.

Most of the rooms in the castle were still—as they had been in the old knight's time—unlovely, and scant of comfort.

The high narrow passages could not be altered; the stone stair had still its Fraser tartan carpeting; the saloon was a dreary waste; and the

hall gaunt, grey, and chilly even in summer; but one room in the tower Frank had altered for his special behoof, and had agonised architectural symmetry by throwing out a bow-window that opened with steps on to the lawn.

It was the dearest little octagon room you ever saw, with soft, wide sofas, dark-red velvet and big brass nails at the chimneypiece, and black bearskin rug before the deep hearth.

Cunning arm-chairs, low and spring-stuffed, and fat square footstools, that did not lose their balance every time you passed them, as did certain evil-disposed ones, with gilt claws, in the drawing-room.

On one of these stools Miss Filmer seated herself, close to the window; while Blanche possessed herself of the key to the tea-table, by squeezing past its three curved legs, and adroitly gaining the teapot, before Lady Blake had divested her feet of the goloshes she was wont to wear in the finest weather.

Outside the window, the sportsmen assembled—the two Berties, immensely picturesque in their tall Tyrolese hats—Jack Eversley, with grimy boots and hands deep in the pockets of his old shooting-coat, dreaming of a sonata—and Frank with the unknown petting Brown Bess, the pet setter, in the background; and Major Fitzwigram (the 'Court Journal' they called him, for his anecdotes and general veracity) had come into the boudoir, and was being charming to Miss Gort and Lucy Blake about their walking powers, which, he said, reminded him so exactly of the De Lays (be-aautiful women—one of them married the Duke of—hem—hem—you know, when they were girls). As she sat by the window, with the daffodil sky behind the pearl-shadowed outline of her figure, with the light lingering on the jewelled locket at her throat, and touching her hair with a golden caress, Georgie half-dreamt, half-thought, of a day long ago, when a voice, unheard now for ten long years, had been sounding in her ears. Surely she heard it now!

How strange that was, that feeling of the past, that did sometimes so vividly return to her—only in little scenes though—only in one or two scenes—by the garden wall, near the walnut-tree: the leaves had fallen with that peculiar trickling faint noise, and there had been a bird that sang out suddenly. He had said, 'My own for ever!' and she had said, 'For ever—your true love for ever!' She had been so thin, then; how she had longed for plenty of gloves and a new bonnet! Who was this stranger—this new man? What did it matter? How would it be, if he came back again? He would come back suddenly—and what should she say? It was so impossible to realize, that her thoughts changed all quickly—'tea, yes, please, a cup of tea.'

There was a clatter of teaspoons and talking between the tea-drinkers within and those outside the window. Frank Fraser came and knelt at Georgie Filmer's side, in hope of a word, but she did not even look at him, and he was obliged to pretend he was petitioning for 'the cup that cheers.'

'He should have only one lump,' Lady Blanche said, 'unless he instantly told the name of the man in grey. Nobody could tell her who he was,—not even the "Court Journal," and she was dying to know.'

The 'Court Journal' protested he had not been asked, and Frank, springing to his feet, said, 'By all means Lady Blanche should know; he would bring him to be introduced in form.'

'Why do you not embrace your kinsman, Miss Blake?' Tom Bertie asked. 'He is a cousin come home from the wars; no end of a hero.'

Miss Blake was at some pains to explain, that though she was related to Frank, yet all his cousins were not hers; and Fitzwigram was struck by the justness of her argument, and related a case in point, where a countess's sister had been no sort of relation to a marchioness's stepmother.

Frank led the new comer up by the arm, and presented him as 'Our well-beloved Simon Fraser, colonel of her Majesty's — Regiment, and

our most trusty kinsman, sweet lady,—candidate for tea and your favour.' Lady Blake, further, was mollified by the courteous explanation that Colonel Fraser gave her of his sudden and unlooked-for appearance. He had ventured to make sure for a welcome, and had written a letter, that would arrive that evening, but had been met by Frank on the hill-side, as he was making his way on foot to Glen Talloch, where he had purposed awaiting the reply to his letter.

After he had spoken to Lady Blake, and the introduction of the other ladies had been gone through, there occurred a little pause in the talking; and suddenly there was a crash of broken glass, and the mirror (a small oval one framed in curious ebony carving, over the mantelpiece) fell to the ground. Happily, no one was near it, and only itself was injured; but the violent noise startled and discomposed every one, and after the first shrieking and exclaiming, came the wonder how it could have happened; there was no apparent cause.

'I can remember that glass there as long as I can remember anything,' said Frank, with much regret, as he picked up the fragments. 'Can't you, Simon?'

'Yes,' said Simon, gravely. 'It is an evil omen that it should fall as I enter the house. It must be an omen. It is a ghostly, horrible thing, to happen' (the ladies all agreed). 'And, by-the-by, was not the ghost room just above, in the tower?'

'What ghost room?' asked Miss Gort.

'Oh! didn't she know?—the "doom chamber," that had never been opened, since—oh! nobody knew how long ago—that never must be opened. If I were you I would open it at once, old fellow—you may find a treasure,' said Arthur Bertie. But his proposition brought such a chorus of horrified remonstrance from the Blakes, and the General, that he was quite overpowered.

'What would happen if you did open it?' Julia asked, at length.

'Well, they say I should meet my

death,' Frank replied, laughing uneasily. 'Of course it is only a tradition; but no Fraser has dared to open it yet. I dare say Simon here would not object to my trying; eh, Simon? Give you a chance, old boy.'

Colonel Fraser laughed, but would not speak about it. He said he was afraid of ghosts, and believed all the stories he had ever heard.

Blanche Eversley went out again to look at the tower, to find out the window of the 'doom chamber,' as they called it; and oddly enough, the moonlight, just risen on a cloud, was reflected with a cold grey sheen on the narrow panes of one window in the tower.

A shudder passed through the little lady, and she ran back to the boudoir, declaring she had seen the ghost itself. Whereupon they all sallied out, and the light having disappeared, great mystery was pronounced upon the event, and it was voted highly terrible that such a room should exist in the vicinity of a tea-table and tea-drinking Christians.

'Georgie looks as pale as possible,' Blanche declared; 'and she was sure she must be pale too. Suppose they were all to go and dress now?'

Ten years ago Simon Fraser had been quartered at Devonport, an ensign with broad shoulders, slim waist, and inflammable heart. A half-pay captain dwelt in a certain villa near the town, very poor, and father to three daughters, of whom the youngest was beautiful, slender, and just seventeen. Simon met the girls at garrison balls, and fell in love with this beautiful youngest. Every day in the High Street, on Saturday when the band played, and most evenings of the week, in the little villa garden, Simon was dawdling beside the Miss Filmers. Georgie made him muffetees, and book-marks; he gave her new waltzes, and boxes of chocolate. They were well-born folk, but poverty-stricken, addicted to shifts and pinches unbecoming their position, and given to dyed silks and bad gloves. There was an impulsive confidence, a dreamy budding

charm in the girl, that touched every fibre of Simon Fraser's heart; and she told him he was her 'only love now and for ever.'

The half-pay papa looked up Castle Fraser in 'Burke,' and the cockles of his heart were warmed by its legends of its wealth and dignity. He made just one little mistake—Simon's father being second, not eldest, son of Sir Andrew, as he, the papa, assured himself. The eldest son, in fact, married some years after the birth of his nephew Simon, and had died shortly after, leaving Frank, our hero, a small curly-haired fag at Charter House, at the very moment when Captain Filmer appropriated his inheritance to his cousin Simon.

The regiment was ordered to India. Simon asked, 'Might he not take her with him?' He offered to exchange and stay at home—leave the army he could not, he was too poor. Of the secret doubt and dismay this word caused he knew nothing. Georgie wept, and said 'it was very, very hard, but she would bear it for his sake: he must go to India, and in a year he should claim her. No need to try and soften papa's heart—inexorable papa; let them submit and be true, true, true to each other.' So he went; and at first she wrote every day, then every week, then by the monthly mail—not much in the letters—she had no time. Grandmamma had come, and being fairy godmother, had taken Georgie to London. Oh! if only he were to be there! She had new bonnets and lemon-coloured gloves. Then London was delightful—only she did not half enjoy it as she might have done.

'Heir to Castle Fraser!' said grandmamma. 'Goodness gracious! he was only a second son; not a farthing; half a dozen brothers and sisters; a sub in a marching regiment!'

Georgie held her peace, wrote her letters still, but kept her eyes and ears well open to all that grandmamma said on the subject of marketable matrimony.

Grandmamma wrote to Devonport that she could not take all the girls, but she would keep Georgie, and

should marry her well, she had every hope, before the end of the season.

Somebody went out to India—a new aide-de-camp to the governor-general, and brought all the gossip, photos of the pretty girls, *on dits* of the matches. Georgie had a letter from her *fiancée*, telling her he felt he had done ill to leave her exposed to the temptations and trials of London. He could, besides, not bear life without her. His father had purchased his step, and he was on his way home to claim her. He should be with her almost as soon as his letter. Would she write one line, to Malta, to welcome him?

Georgie received the letter after breakfast. She was going to a Richmond pic-nic, and wanted to get a new bonnet for the occasion: she was *really* in a hurry, but after a moment's deliberation she gave up the bonnet, and sat down to answer. The letter was posted before twelve, and Miss Filmer went to the picnic, which was a very pleasant one. Simon Fraser turned very pale when he read his love's letter at the poste restante; he said never a word, but took his passage back to India in the vessel that sailed that night, and he rejoined his regiment in the hot plains at once.

Miss Filmer wondered whether the next mail would bring her letters; looked up and down the street when the carriage stopped, with half an expectation of a reproachful face. But her mind was set at ease by the list of passengers to Bombay, and she knew that her 'true love for ever' had taken his dismissal as he ought.

Why Georgie did not marry the middle-aged baronet, the small viscount, or any of the eligibles, as confidently expected by grandmamma, deponent saith not; she flew too high, some said, and she liked flirting. After two seasons grandmamma had the bad taste to die. The Belgrave Street house was shut up.

'Famille Filmer' went abroad *en masse* to some small German court; there was a story afloat about a prince of some sort, a Russian some said, others gave him a principality in Nassau; people shrugged their

shoulders, and said she had always been the greatest flirt. Georgie came back to England handsomer than ever and well dressed; money had been left by the grandmamma, at least sufficient for good gloves. In summer she lived with a married sister, a quiet dowdy M.P.'s wife; in autumn and winter she reigned at watering-places and hunting parties; she had jewels on hand and wrist; she had a suite of young Life-guardsmen in the fever stage of admiration, and she had lots of dear friends; but though she did not look five-and-twenty, it was quite ten years since she was seventeen, and she was still Georgie Filmer. All these years neither by word spoken or written had news ever reached her of Simon Fraser; the recollection of that first love was to her memory like an old-fashion plate. Only she used to say to herself, 'When he *does* come back,' and brace herself as if for an encounter. He *had* come back; she had met his eye and touched his hand again, and had seen and known by instinct that she was a stranger, and less than a stranger, to him. Did he even know who she was? she wondered. For the next days it seemed unlikely that the question of recognition should be solved, so completely was his manner to Miss Filmer devoid of consciousness of their past position with regard to each other.

Only there was thus much of sign that in place of the attraction Georgie exercised on every other man in the house, she met with an indifference from him that verged on discourtesy. She had prepared sundry speeches, above all, sundry feelings for this meeting—in case of reproach and recrimination; in case of infatuation and entreaty—preparations entirely needless, as it would appear. Had he also prepared feelings? Apparently he had none at all, and on her mind, accustomed to look on men's hearts as so many notes on which her fingers had the special art of playing what tunes she chose for them to dance to, it began to dawn that the position was changed, and that her heart must tread a measure to the tune that he should play. This

both perplexed and amazed Miss Filmer.

From the first hour of Colonel Fraser's arrival the whole party had voted him charming. His voice was sympathetic, he had good teeth, keen, rather cold eyes, a short red moustache, still shorter dark-brown hair, broad shoulders, and beautiful feet and hands.

His manner was perfect; he was quiet and a little sarcastic, which the ladies liked; the men thought him a wonderful shot and a thoroughly good fellow. Lady Blake was quite *éprise*; she wore unwonted top-knots and clean gloves for his benefit, and was quite tame in his presence.

Blanche—fickle fair one!—meditated deposing the dear Berties from their post, and electing him prime favourite; he would be *such* a big dog to lead about, only query, would he follow?

That even his cousin should reflect some of Frank's charms was to Lucy Blake matter of course, and she treated him with according complacency.

On that simple damsel Colonel Simon bestowed more attention and kindness than on the other ladies, from a quick perception of the state of her affections and their probable fate, and a consequent chivalrous compassion.

He will tell Frank all about it, and adieu to Castle Gloom, adieu to my intrigues, thought Georgie, and she told herself so with a certain scornful indifference; but he did not, and she was angry because he cared too little to tell.

A sort of impatience so possessed her that she could scarce control it. His presence stirred in her an emotion she could not explain, and for which she found no vent.

One evening they went out on the lawn after dinner—all but Simon Fraser. Georgie was restless, heard nothing that was said, snubbed Frank, pretended she was catching cold, and went in-doors by herself. Colonel Fraser was writing at a little table—she went up to him—they were alone in the room, and laid her hand on the back of his chair; he must have seen the agita-

tion in her face. He looked up at her, said stiffly, 'Am I in your way?' and made a movement as if to rise. She walked away from him without a word. A knot gathered in her throat, something clutched at her heart so that she could not breathe, and her limbs shook so that she had to sit down. She could have uttered a bitter cry, but she was quite silent. He got up, folded the note he had written, and stepped out of the window to join the rest of the party.

They used to dance in the evening; the neighbours dined; Mrs. John Gordon played waltzes; the Fellowesses sent their girls: one night they had a little ctillion.

'Rose or butterfly?' Frank Fraser asked, leading Lady Blanche and Miss Filmer to his cousin.

'Butterfly,' said Simon, looking at Lady Blanche.

She laughed, and danced off with Frank. He had not asked Georgie to dance once, as yet; now he merely took one turn of the waltz, and then with a slight bow left her at her seat.

Georgie met the austere gaze of Miss Lucy as she stood there.

'Flirting with HIM now!' the young lady was mentally exclaiming.

Georgie smiled, laughed, and danced beautifully all the evening; but she felt as a wild animal does when balked of its spring.

On Saturday night there was no dancing; the Fellowesses dined, stupid people; the Berties, bored by strangers, inveigled Jack Eversley and Simon into the billiard-room directly after dinner. Blanche, bereft of her little court, became unsociable, and announced a headache. Mr. Fellowes tried hard to keep awake, and could not. Lady Blake talked solemnly over the fire—it was very slow. Mrs. Fellowes had brought a niece with red arms and a wreath, to whom Frank had to do conversation.

Amongst other topics the doomed chamber was aired by the helpful Julia Gort. The wreathed niece evinced curiosity and interest, and a discussion ensued on superstition, &c. Miss Blake thought supersti-

tion unscriptural and wicked, so did Miss Gort, but she would give anything to see what would happen if the door were opened; and Georgie Filmer asked Frank if he would really scruple to open it—really and truly. At first he laughed it off, and then confessed he should not like to do it. Lady Blake joined in with the laudable motive of snubbing Miss Filmer, and the delicate sarcasm of that young lady provoked the worthy woman into phrases involved and emphatic on the subject. Diversion was happily effected by a pathetic entreaty from the General—the peaceful General—for some music, and as Miss Lucy scored one with her Mendelssohn, Lady Blake was calmed, and Mrs. Fellowes remarked that of all misfortunes it was the greatest when a man who loved music married a woman who was not a musician, an *apropos* which fitted Miss Filmer and Frank, and quite mollified her ladyship.

Sunday being at no time the most propitious day for a Highland shooting party, it chose on that particular Sunday to rain in torrents; outside the house reigned dreariness indescribable; inside discordant elements threatened to disturb the general harmony; everybody's temper more or less *cris-cross* that morning. In the first place, every one was late for breakfast except Lady Blake, who revenged herself by scolding her daughter openly, and drawing moral lessons out of unpunctuality for the benefit of the other delinquents. Her ladyship announced that she never suffered *anything* to prevent her going to church, and when no one took up the intended gauntlet, made pertinent inquiries of the other ladies; wondered if Frank drove to Dee side, or walked to the parish church. Arthur Bertie voted Sunday a mistake everywhere except in London. One could go to Maidenhead, and there was 'Bell's Life,' his brother explained to Miss Gort's query as to a favourite preacher, and Jack Egerton suggested they should go to bed again till dinner-time.

Not only did it rain, but to make bad worse, it pretended to clear just in time to provoke a possibility of

church-going, but too late for the morning service at the English chapel of Dee side.

Lady Blake in goloshes and waterproof cloak came to beat up recruits for the Presbyterian service, and Lady Blanche, out of opposition, became violently High Church. The rain came on again, and nobody did go; but a battle of churches was waged between the two ladies; the one carrying about ostentatious little books that she did not read, with dangling crosses and crimson and gold ribbons to mark special prayers, and the other piling the table with commentaries and limp tracts, and pouncing on all novels and newspapers to hide them.

General Fitzwigram, trying to trim his little bark between the two tides, was much buffeted by both. Blanche snubbed him, and Lady Blake compelled him to attend a private and impromptu ceremony in the dining-room, where she preached to her daughter, Miss Gort, and a few of the servants.

Before luncheon, when the ladies were all together in the library, the poor man further put his foot into it by asking, cheerfully, 'By-the-by, how had the discussion ended last night—that romantic colloquy over the haunted chamber? Which of the fair ladies had gained the day? Was Miss Filmer's behest to be obeyed, or did Lady Blake reign paramount over their host?'

Lady Blake turned a piercing glance on the company in general.

'My nephew has far too much sense to think of such folly; he was only laughing at Miss Filmer. The room will, of course, not be opened.'

Georgie Filmer looked up at Mr. Fitzwigram and smiled, but would not be provoked into answering.

'Are you superstitious, Lady Blake?' inquired Miss Gort, innocently; 'do you dread the curse?'

'No,' emphatically and with severity, 'I am *not* superstitious; I hold all superstition to be mere weakness, and weakness I abhor, as I do the mere desire of power unless for a great and good end.'

'Ah, then you will let the fair lady's behest be done?' the 'Court

Journal' interrupted in his most fascinating manner.

'But the folly of granting an idle whim is a different thing,' Lady Blake continued, sternly, transfixing Mr. Fitzwigram with her eagle glance; 'and Miss Filmer, even if she supposed Mr. Fraser meant to obey her behest' (this was said with a delightful emphasis) 'would never think of asking for anything so absurd and unreasonable.'

A dead pause followed these words. Lady Blake felt herself monarch of all she surveyed. The gong for lunch sounded, and she rustled with dignity into the dining-room.

'Miss Filmer eats nothing,' Jack Eversley remarked, and it was quite true; with some satisfaction Lucy had seen that her rival was pale and languid all day. Well might she be pale.

Two spirits were fighting over her soul, and she had lost the power, or the will, to bid them cease and be still. Was it love, indeed, the wild throbbing that shook her, the doubt that held her in thrall?

To have him, to give up all for him, one moment—then—no, no, not give up the wealth, the name; she sickened at the thought of poverty, of insignificance. She had only the world, and could she let it slip?

And yet—to lay her heart in his hand—a hundred times she had said it to herself during the past night; to bid him hold her, take her, keep her—he was her master, already she felt it. If—if—yes, if, after all, the doom were true—and why not?—if the room were opened, and it were true—he would have all—she need not lose it, an evil, evil voice spoke in her ear—why should she be tempted, she was tired of resisting and losing. That he had ceased to care for her, that only his complete indifference prevented his hating or despising her, she never told herself; it made no matter to her that he had never addressed one word to her, never seemed conscious of her very presence since they had met again. She was not used to defeat, she did not even contemplate it.

If she had no appetite, no more had Frank; he had divined, as those do who love, that some cloud had come between his love and him, that some subtle influence was working to her disquiet. Uneasy, half jealous, he was ready to put his neck under her foot if she would but step on it.

He hovered about till he found a chair close to her, in the window of the boudoir, and while her eyes sought the tall figure that paced up and down outside, he murmured his unhappiness at her evident avoidance of him. 'Had he offended her.' She turned her eyes on his; he did not read that wistful look aright; it served only to drown his senses. Pressing his forehead with his two hot hands he poured forth foolish words from his very heart, incoherent, mad words of love and of entreaty. He scarcely knew what he said or whether she replied.

'It is only the fancy of the moment,' she said, slowly, and in a voice that sounded strange to herself. 'You would not grant me one boon, one little thing, if I were to ask it of you, and yet you say you could die for me. Men are so,' she pursued, dreamily, not heeding his vehement denial.

'They would love us, and hold us fully paid for giving our whole selves for their fancy. To test the hold on their love one has but to feign a caprice and it is enough to shake it.'

'You want my heart, my life, all my love.'

She turned her face to him, and his colour went and came under the wild mystery of her eyes. Her hand dropped from her lap and her fingers touched his palm.

'Try me, try me; ask anything you like,' he said, vainly trying to control his voice. 'If you could guess, if I could show you how I would give my life, if that would win your love, tell me if by any means I can prove my words.'

She looked another moment in his face, and with a complete change of tone said, 'Your aunt was so irate this morning, imagining that you would listen to me instead of to what she called common sense, herself

she meant, most likely. I believe she fancied I meant to arrogate to myself undue power to make myself mistress. We had been talking about that doomed chamber. I believe she was quite right, though how such superstition should come under the name of common sense I hardly know; but she was so emphatic and fierce that it almost made me believe my own power.'

'So you are mistress. By George, she is past bearing: she shall never enter the house again. Did she fancy I should listen to her sooner than to you, idiot that she is? If you bid me, I would open the room against the will of twenty such as she!'

'Would you do it? I can see her dismay. That would be a proof indeed, if you would do such a thing at my request.'

She stopped. 'What a fool I am to fancy it!'

'If you wish it it shall be done; only say, say'—his voice shook so that he could scarcely form the words—'tell me, if it is done, will you give me the answer I asked for. Shall I win you?' He held her hand convulsively.

'I may fairly say yes,' she replied, 'for you will never do it.' Frank rose; he was deadly pale, and stumbled, in his agitation, half falling as he left the room.

Outside, in the misty rain, Simon Fraser paced up and down. Georgie waited till Frank's step died away in the passage, and then she went into the hall, opened the front door, and stood there. Colonel Fraser had turned to come in; he was close to her. She stood half in half out of the doorway; holding the handle in her left hand, she put out the right to touch his arm. Simon had been looking straight before him as he walked, and when he perceived who stood there, no change passed over his expression. Perfectly cold and impassive his face was, making no sign, save that careful step that courtesy demanded, lest his damp plaid should come in contact with her dress.

Imploringly her eye sought his; she uttered his name softly, but he did not hear, and when she turned

to follow him he had already left the hall.

Georgie went to her own room. 'How pale I am,' going up to the glass; and then she sat before it, gazing at herself, till she lost the consciousness of the person whose white face and deep dark eyes looked at her from the mirror.

She was still sitting there when a voice said outside the door, 'Darling, are you there?' and some one opened gently and came in.

'Blanche, have you any rouge?'

'Rouge, dear? yes — no — yes. Why rouge, dear?'

'I am so awfully haggard; I must do something to make myself lovely.'

'You are pale,' Blanche said, in some awe.

'Oh, darling, they are in such a state of mind downstairs about that stupid room, you know; and I thought I'd come to you, as you are all powerful, to see if you would say a word to him, darling.'

'Who is downstairs and what is the matter?' Georgie asked, leaving the toilet-table. 'Blanche, dear, it's too cold for you in here; we will go to your room, and you shall rouge me.'

'Just tell me, dear, has he proposed?'

'Yes, Blanche, the deed is done.'

'Oh, darling, I'm so glad.' Kissing ensued, and then the little chaperone said, coaxingly, 'Dear, you will tell him not to open the door, won't you? Think, if anything happened.'

Georgie replied scornfully that she wondered people could be such geese as to believe in ghosts; that being now the person most interested in Frank's well-being, she hoped she might be trusted not to endanger it wilfully. It was just like Lady Blake to believe in bogies, she herself being one. 'On the contrary, my dear, I have told him that I only say "yes" if it is opened. I am not going to be defeated by Goody Blake. No; if he will not do so small a thing because I ask it I should not feel safe for my future. I despise superstition, and I hate being thwarted, so he is to choose between the bogie and me.'

Lady Blanche then basely aban-

doned the cause she had come to plead, and vowed it would be charming to see what a rage Goody would be in when she found who was to gain the day, and Georgie was now in no need of rouge. A bright flush succeeded her former pallor. Only Colonel Fraser, Lucy Blake, and Miss Gort down stairs, Blanche reported; the colonel seemed a little touched with gentle Lucy; rather a good thing would it not be? Georgie must patronise the *chastes amours* of the future cousins. On pretence of letters Georgie left her friend and went down stairs. General Fitzwigram was doing the civil thing to Sunday by reading a book of religious poetry, and quoting aloud the favourite passages of a dear, departed, and highly evangelical duchess, Miss Gort being his audience. At the piano Lucy Blake sat playing the most beautiful of Mozart's masses. Colonel Fraser, his chin resting on his hands, sat near her, a rapt and silent listener, speaking only now and then to ask for favourite pieces of music. Georgie stood by the window; the yellow sky faded into pale daffodil; purple-grey shadows stole into the room; the music rose and fell in measured cadence; the stately sweetness of Mozart suited well with the peaceful evening time; the rain had cleared off suddenly, and left a calm, lovely stillness, that seemed all unconscious of the dreariness that but now had clouded the outer world. When the gong rang noisily outside it was as if a spell had been broken. 'It is too late now to go back,' she said, half aloud, as they all rose and took their candles.

When Frank Fraser told the old butler, Sandy, that he wanted to speak to the carpenter—Laing must come up with his tools; the turret door was to be opened—Sandy flatly refused to deliver the message: his usual respect made the present discourtesy more marked. 'It were no possible,' the old man said, 'that he should go against the Word, and break the Sabbath-day. And as regarded the door, it was a maist fuleish thocht to remove a naeba's landmark, and tempt the Lord.'

Of course his master said he was

not going to break the Sabbath (Frank had clean forgotten the fact), but Laing must come and speak to him all the same. Sandy had remonstrances on the tip of his tongue, but his master left him without another word.

The resolve to open the door was known throughout the house. Frank had no easy time of it, and everything was in a storm.

His aunt flashed terrible glances, and evidently portended a remonstrance. The gentlemen were waylaid, and compelled to have private interviews, which had no result, for who could interfere with Frank in his own house?

Lucy was tearful, and haunted the staircase, manifestly with a view to adjuring Frank. Simon Fraser she did stop, and her woeful voice and white face touched him. He said she need not be in such fear. These old tales were superstitious. No harm would come to Frank. Besides, why did not she lay her commands on him? It was so kind of her to care. He turned it off with a pretty speech, a little *galanterie* about the impossibility of refusing her requests. But she had no opportunity of making one. Frank was not to be spoken to.

Frank was flushed, excited, ready to be defiant if occasion should offer; would not meet the tearful gaze fixed on him; would not take any notice of her at all. Poor Lucy!

Into Julia Gort's kind bosom she poured her grief after dinner, whispering mournfully in one corner. Her mother, twinkling sternly in countless bugles, read Dr. Cumming's most prophetic work in the middle of the room, and Blanche sat on the rug and had private jokes with her friend the culprit.

The culprit was most charming. She drew her little chaperone into a talk half mysterious, wholly egotistic, about her own affairs; hints of repulsed lovers, baffled admirers, confidences as to 'trials,' and small half confessions.

No one was a better listener than Georgie. She had helpful words, like pins, to fasten the disjointed ideas of her vague little companion.

She had delicate sarcasms where-with to tickle the 'enemy,' and just sufficient—not too much—appreciation of the 'objects.'

A good *confidante* must not be too sympathetic in admiration, or she diminishes the sense of monopoly that is so essential to happiness in the confider.

The group at the fireplace looked so cosy, that no wonder the men, one and all, came to join them.

'Suppose we all sit on the floor,' Frank said; and so they did, for the most part. After some persuasion, the sad Lucy and her friend came too, and were established on low chairs; Lucy's feelings would not allow her quite to sit on the rug. Lady Blake, on a high hard chair, set a manifest example of good Sunday behaviour in the background.

'We have never heard the story of the doom-chamber, Frank,' said Lady Blanche; 'you promised we should.'

'Yes, yes; let's have the story,' the Berties and Mr. Fitzwigram voted; 'by all means the story.'

'I can't tell it,' Frank said. 'Simon shall. He's A 1 at telling stories. Simon, begin.' Frank nestled quite close to the corner where Georgie sat, but she leant her chin on her hand, and took no notice of him.

'Now Colonel Fraser, do begin,' said Lady Blanche.

She had forgotten her gloomy and prophetic views, and was disposed now to patronise the whole proceeding.

'You shall tell it yourself, Lady Blanche,' he said, 'and we will all sit spell-bound to hear it.'

'No, no; you must begin. We really do want to hear it; don't we, everybody?'

Everybody said they did.

'Now, begin. Once upon a time there was a lady——'

'Or—In looking over some old MSS, I stumbled upon——'

'That's the proper way to begin; and tell plenty of details.'

'The fact is, I am afraid that no old MSS. existed for me to stumble on; but all I know of the story I heard from an old neighbour of ours, a Mr. Gordon, a great poker into family history, and who knew

most of the stories current in days of old. I dare say Frank heard him tell it, too. Well, if not, so much the better; I shall not be brought to book if I make mistakes. I will invent as many details as Lady Blanche pleases; but I was told the story very long ago, and I forget all but the main facts.

'Moreover, I forget the dates and names; but, anyhow, it happened a long time ago.

'You must know that Castle Gloom came into the family some generations ago. It was not always a Fraser possession; it belonged to a certain Grant of Gloom, who, I fancy, was not a very reputable character. This Grant had a daughter—daughter and only child.

'There was a match made between her and a Fraser, nephew to the then Lord Lovat. This Fraser seems not to have been a bad fellow, but the lady did not care for him; in fact, she had a lover of her own—a cousin, who ought, or fancied he ought, to have had the property—a most particular blackguard.'

'Can't you tell us what she was like?' interrupted Lady Blanche.

'She had the new colour of hair, all frizzly, you know; a low forehead, and no crinoline,' Arthur Bertie explained.

'They were married,' Simon went on—'Fraser of Lovat and Miss Grant. The cousin was a constant guest. He and Fraser used to play, and play high, the fond wife looking over her husband's hand, no doubt, and the cousin winning always. They used to sit in the room in the tower, which was my lady's boudoir. Fraser seems to have lost more and more. His wife urged him to throw yet higher stakes, and win it all back. One night he staked the castle and lands, and lost all. He left the room. His wife came up to Grant, and bade him hold to the last part of their bargain, to do for Fraser with a quick draught, and fly with her. He laughed in her face, and asked what for he should tangle himself with a wild wife when he had got the house and lands. Let her bide by her man.

She was furious, and struck him with a dagger. Fraser came in as he

fell. She denounced him as a traitor and false loon, and bade her husband despatch him, and Grant died cursing them, and cursing the room in which they were, and the threshold that he had crossed to enter it. Men were lords of their own houses in those days. No one seems to have asked indiscreet questions as to what he did or wherefore. The room was shut up from that day, and the tradition held thenceforth that, when it should be opened, evil would befall the Lord of Gloom.

'What became of the lady is not told. One can fancy the *ménage* not being the pleasantest in the world, my own belief is that she went mad.'

There was a horrified pause. Miss Gort drew a long breath at last and said, if the door had never been opened since, they would be sure to find all sorts of funny things just as they were left.

'By George! so we shall,' said Arthur Bertie; 'old what's-his-name's skeleton, and the dagger and all.'

'These old families have often curious stories,' Mr. Fitzwigram remarked. 'Apropos to dagger, did you ever see that dagger that they show at Blakely, the Lord B——'s house in Wales? Most curious. Lady B—— always makes me tell the story. I remember one day her saying to the duchess—her sister, you know—"Now, Frances, Mr. Fitzwigram shall tell you that story." To be sure, what a charming person she was. Did you ever meet her, Lady Blake?'

'No,' said Lady Blake, sternly. She was turning over in her mind how to comment on the story in such manner as to deliver a home thrust to the culprit, Miss Filmer, whom she had invested with all the qualities described in the *Lady of Gloom*. Finding no speech sufficiently cutting, she rose, and begged Frank to light the candles.

'We are going to stay up,' Lady Blanche said, looking up from her lowly seat with a wicked smile, 'till Monday morning allows us to open the door.'

'I could not answer to my conscience, Lady Blanche,' Lady Blake

replied, twitching her face into a smile; 'I could not answer to my conscience if I sanctioned such a proceeding by my presence.'

'Lucy—Miss Gort—my dear, shall we go now? Those whose consciences allow them will, of course, not be guided by my opinion.'

Frank brought the candles with a sweet smile, and hopes that they would sleep well.

'You had much better stay, Miss Gort,' Lady Blanche called out; 'it will be great fun.' And all the gentlemen joined in chorus.

'Why do you go to bed?' Colonel Fraser said to Lucy as she left the room. 'We want you to protect us against the evil spirit. You ought to stay.'

Lucy had not a word to say. What woman but longs to see a locked door unclosed? and it is human nature to hate being sent to bed.

It was nearly midnight then.

'You are not really going to do it, are you?' Jack Eversley said, quietly, when the Blakes had gone.

He had made no comment before; and when Jack spoke it was generally to the purpose.

Blanche looked guilty and frightened; the men exchanged glances. Frank looked at Miss Filmer, on whose face a smile, half scornful, half amused, was playing.

'To be sure I am,' Frank replied, lightly; 'I have made my will, and paid my tailor's bill, and it's all right.'

The lugubrious face of Sandy appeared at the door. 'The carpenter is here, sir.'

'Hurra!' exclaimed Blanche, catching her friend's arm; 'now for the skeleton. Hoo! hoo! Doesn't it make you creep, Georgie? Come and get a shawl.'

Frank helped to put on the shawls.

'I shall hold you to your word,' he said to Georgie; and something in his tone gave her a feeling of half-respect half-fear, that was quite new.

'What if he makes me love him after all?' she said to herself.

It was a low narrow door placed in a little recess in the wall, half way

up a stone staircase that led up to the tower, and from which branched, a little way above the closed door, the main passage for the bedroom, to which the principal staircase also led at the other end. There was a narrow step or ledge between the door and the stair, and on this ledge, Laing, the carpenter, knelt with his screws and saw, to undo the nails and the plaster that held the door; there was no handle at all, and the keyhole had been stopped up. The others sat or stood above and below the doorway on the stair; the maids crept from the passage, and the man-servants from below, to look on. Julia Gort joined them, having escaped from the indignation of Lady Blake and the tears of Lucy. Small jokes and whispers went on while the carpenter worked; no one seemed to like to speak out loud. At last he turned round and signified that a push would open the door—all obstacles were removed.

Frank's voice sounded loud and hollow in the vaulted stone stairway, as he called for the lamp, and in breathless silence the group behind him waited while he and Simon leant their shoulders against the wood-work: there was a low crunching of the plaster, and then the door fell backward with a dull thud. Every head was bent forward; the two Frasers and the carpenter stood in the doorway, when a slight figure like a ghost in its white drapery and pale face passed between them and stepped first into the 'doom chamber.' It was Lucy Blake.

'Take care,' Colonel Fraser exclaimed, catching at her sleeve, 'there may be nails and holes.'

His voice broke the spell that lay on all the others. Lucy, trembling and overwrought, was unnoticed; she scarcely knew that Simon Fraser drew her gently back, and made her sit down on the stair outside.

Poor Lucy! Frank did not even see what she had meant to risk for his sake. He had turned as soon as he had put his foot within the room, and read his answer in Georgie's eyes.

There was no skeleton, but there was dust—dust and stifled, death-like closeness. A worn-out colour-

less rug, in the middle of the worm-eaten boards, a rickety table with curved legs leaning against the wall, a few chairs gnawed and rotten, a black wooden seat under the window and round one side of the room, cobwebs everywhere, a faded bit of tartan hanging by one nail at the side of the narrow, dimmed window, a cupboard-door half open—was all they saw; a dead mouse lay in the empty cupboard; but on lifting the fallen door they found a pistol of clumsy shape but curiously-wrought inlaid handle, and tied to it a knot of ribbon, stiff and stained—so stiff that it broke into little bits, like wood, at the first touch.

After the first moment every one had crowded into the room. There were exclamations of disappointment—no skeleton, no glove, no torn letter, no ghost nor trace of ghost—only the most abominable smell of dead mouse—of dust-don. After due poking about and much laughter, they all went down stairs, and drank to Frank's health.

Lucy went to her room and cried bitterly. Her mother came in to hear all about it.

'He is safe, quite safe! But, oh! mamma, I saw him speak to her afterwards; and it is all settled—I know it. Oh! Frank, Frank—she is not worthy of him—she does not care for him! I saw his face while he spoke to her. When they all went down again he and she went away into the hall, and then he came in, and took Lady Blanche's hands, and I heard him thanking her so for something, and saying he was the happiest fool in England; and she called her husband, and they both shook hands with him; and she said she had been so hoping and praying for it, and she was so glad "for you both," she said. I came away then—I could not stay. Oh! mamma, mamma, if only she were good and nice, I should not mind so much!' And Lucy went to bed, and was very miserable.

Save for dust and dirt on the stairs, no sign made itself evident that the 'doom chamber' had been opened, and the fate of the Frasers defied. At breakfast Frank was in wild spirits; so was Lady Blanche.

Georgie did not come down till late. When she came in she was quite beautiful in a white gown with peach-coloured ribbon at her throat and tying her hair. She blushed when the Berties and Jack Eversley shook hands warmly with her, and she squeezed Blanche's hand, and smiled at the Blakes, with a smile that ought to have disarmed them. Frank followed her after breakfast, and she let him walk with her under the great lime trees, where he would have knelt down and kissed her footprints on the moss, had she not given her hand to be kissed instead. He might tell every one—he might do all he pleased, now, she said; and he became so wildly happy that she told him, laughing, he was to remember the sun had not gone down on the day yet since he had defied the curse, and that one must not count one's chickens too soon.

When the gentlemen started to shoot, Simon Fraser went up to his cousin and asked if he might have the dogcart to take him to the station. He must go by the one o'clock train.

Frank, greatly surprised, made remonstrance. 'What in the world made him go? It was too shabby a visit. Had anything occurred, or was he only in joke? Of course he could have the dogcart, but must he go?'

Simon protested he had always meant to go that day; he had business—letters; in short, he must bid him good-bye.

The manner of both cousins had a shade of embarrassment—possibly unconscious to themselves, and neither looked the other in the face as he spoke.

'I will not go with these fellows,' Frank said. 'They shall shoot the hill, and meet me and the young ladies at the White Haugh for luncheon. I will stay and see you off.'

But Colonel Fraser would not hear of this; and, after a few more words and a warm grasp of the hand, he parted from his cousin, promising a speedy though vague renewal of their friendship. Not a word of Frank's engagement; not a sign that he guessed, as he did, what

had been the fruit of last night's deed.

From the window Georgie Filmer saw the parting, and saw Simon walk back to the house with his wonted easy tread and set expression. He passed the window close, and saw her, but without any sign of recognition, and she left the room so as to meet him when he should enter the front hall. The servants were there rearranging the plaids and great-coats, and she heard him give the order to have the dogcart at the door at twelve; then she went back to the library, and remained alone for an hour waiting for the next move in the game.

Before twelve the ladies met in the hall, equipped for the walk that they had planned to take to the White Haugh to pic-nic with the sportsmen. 'Was Miss Filmer not ready?' Nobody knew. Creaking boots told her of Lady Blake's approach in time. Georgie was on the sofa with a smelling-bottle when the library-door opened.

'Oh! here she is, dear. Are you not well? Are you not coming?'

Miss Filmer sniffed delicately at her salts, and said she was so sorry—so very. Nobody must stop with her.

'We are all waiting,' Lady Blake's voice said from behind the door. 'Perhaps you will follow?'

'You will say all sorts of pretty things for me, dear Miss Gort, I know you will. I really have such a very bad headache, I don't think I could walk. Thanks so very much—ten thousand thanks! It will be better presently I dare say.'

She watched with all her powers of hearing, till she knew they must be quite gone, and then ran up to her room. How pale she was—how old she looked. Bitterly she turned from the glass, twisted a scarf round her, took her hat and looked again, and then left the room.

They were packing the dogcart. Colonel Fraser was on the steps. Georgie went up to him, and said—

'Will you walk over the lawn with me? You can meet the dogcart at the bottom of the hill. I have something to say to you,' she

added aloud, so that in courtesy he should be obliged not to refuse her request.

Fraser bowed stiffly.

'Certainly—if you wish it.'

He followed her down the steps, and they walked across the lawn together.

She was no bad actress to tread so slowly and daintily by him, for her heart was beating, as it seldom did, with her fear, distrust of her own power, and a firm determination not to fail, at least to have her say, all fighting in her.

To reach the lower terrace they had to go down a rough step or two, half stone, half turf. Neither had spoken till then. Georgie stumbled, and he gave her his hand to help her in regaining firm footing. She stopped for one moment, holding it, and then, as they walked on, said, gently, 'Does it remind you of old times?'—adding, almost under her breath—'as it reminds me; or have you forgotten?'

'The place is so little altered,' he replied, in an unmoved voice; 'everything is exactly as I left it, that, save for missing the dear old knight, I could fancy it was still old times.'

'I meant—but you are a man—you can forget what I must remember for my life. All these days you have not spoken to me one word—not one word. I am a fool, but I felt I must speak once to you again.'

There was a moment's silence, and then he said, gravely, 'It was yourself that bade me forget, Miss Filmer. You wrote to me, so that I had no alternative. I do not quite understand what it is that you would have of me now. It was none of my doing, God knows!' He spoke with calm courtesy, with no trace of emotion.

Clasping her hands together, she spoke. 'Ah! how hard you are; how hard. Do you not know how it was with me, so young, left there in such hands? Were they my own words, do you think, that I wrote? Do you suppose it was my doing? Look at all these years, how I have waited. Should I be here now as I am if—if—. Does one do never a

deed that one repents? Do you not think I have wept and wept over what I did—what they made me do?

'Are you not now engaged to Frank—to my cousin? What can you expect me to say to you?'

'Who has been telling evil things of me? Who has said that to you? Ah! I know whose doing it is,' she exclaimed, bitterly.

'Is it not true?' Colonel Fraser asked, in his ordinary quiet tone. 'He at any rate seems to believe his dream.'

Georgie put her hand to her throat, and drew a long, sobbing breath. 'I will tell you the truth,' she cried. 'I was so tempted—to show you that I was at least not unsought—I was in despair almost, seeing you—seeing the one love I craved withheld. Can you not understand? Do you think I cared for him: do you think I could listen to his voice while I heard yours? Did you think it was mere caprice that made me bid him open that door?' She stopped again for breath.

He shook his head. 'I do not know how to answer you. Perhaps I am grown hard and cold. I think not; but I cannot dig up again what I buried so deep underground. You were wrong to do it,' he said. 'I would have been true and tender to you, Georgie. But it is all over now: no need for reproaches and bitter words.'

'You are hard—hard,' she repeated. 'It is just and right; I must submit. But tell me you forgive me—tell me.—Oh, I cannot bear you to say you forgive me; that is what they say when it is all over: it is heaping turf on the grave. What am I to do with my life now? It is thrown back on me. You could always lead me with a thread.' She passed her hand timidly within his arm, and he let it lie there.

'How fast you walk,' she said; 'are you so anxious to get away, while I feel as if it were my last moment—as if I could not let it slip?'

He replied hastily, 'No, no; you must not think I want to get away. I wish I knew what to say to you.'

I do not wish to say I forgive you; it is all so entirely past and gone. I would have you forget it and be at peace. I have no wish but for your happiness—for your entire happiness and good. You have so much in your hand—' He hesitated a little. 'You have a life to make or mar. If it were so indeed that I could lead you, I would bid you think well what is before you. I would ask you—' he stopped; and they stood opposite each other, she with clasped hands and her eyes on the ground.

'Why not let this be the turning in your life?' he said. 'There is great good before you, if you have the will for it.'

As he looked at her he could not but be moved with her exceeding beauty—the wistful tenderness in her large eyes, so dark and soft with unshed tears.

'I know you will,' he said, and took her hands in his, and held them.

Georgie looked up in his face.

'I know you can never love me,' she said, very low; 'but give me one kiss—it is the last time.'

Something in her look, in her tone, moved him strangely. Had he been hard indeed—too hard? She stood resting a moment, and then, as the flush that her own words had called to her face faded into paleness, he stooped and kissed her.

* * * *

Towards afternoon the day clouded over. A grey mist hung over the hills, and gradually descended on the valley. The birds were silent; the flowers closed their petals, as if it were nightfall; yellow leaves fluttered to the ground in the Lime-walk; a sudden chill and silence filled the air; and the distant rush of the river sounded strangely near and dull.

About four o'clock the whole party came home. The gentlemen could not shoot in the mist. All were quiet, somewhat cross, and cold. Nobody was in the boudoir when they entered.

'I thought,' the General said, 'we should have found the interesting couple together here.'

The fire had gone out: Blanche shuddered, and exclaimed peevishly, at the chilliness of the room, 'Where *could* Frank be?' A small joke was made—some stupidity about not needing any flame but that of love to keep *him* warm, but nobody laughed. Miss Gort—who had rather deserted her friend Lucy since the last night's events pointed to Georgie Filmer as future Lady Gloom—now came in, saying she had been to Miss Filmer's room, and had found her there: she was coming down directly. She had not said a word about Frank.

The footman came in with sticks, and lit the fire; tea was brought; everything became bright and cosy. Georgie came down, with brilliant, feverish eyes, and a red flush on each cheek. She talked, laughed, made tea; and when at last Jack Eversley said, 'And where have you hid Frank?' she looked amazed, and said, 'Frank! was he not with you? I have not seen him!'

Frank had left them at the White Haugh. Frank had gone back as soon as he had found she was not with the other ladies.

They all looked at each other, and Mr. Eversley broke the silence by saying he must have come in: he must have fallen asleep in his room, and went up to look for him.

The daylight, dim already, died at last altogether: no rain fell, but the air was damp and thick. Frank did not come home: had not been seen. He had been shooting capitably all the morning; a little nervous, perhaps, but in excellent form altogether—in such spirits both before lunch, and at lunch, that they had told him he was 'Fay.' He had eaten nothing, but had drunk some champagne, to return thanks for his health that had been proposed. He had thrown away his glass, and had laughed at the shivering of the glass, as it fell on the rocks, and then they had said, 'Frank, you are "Fay!"' He had not gone away at once, but after drinking the champagne, had declared he must go home and console Miss Filmer for her headache; and he had set off by himself. Perhaps the mist had made him

lose his way. 'Had he his gun?' one asked. Yes, he had his gun. And Miss Gort said, 'Don't you remember we heard him shoot just afterwards; and you said, Mr. Bertie, that Frank was having a private *chasse* of his own?'

Miss Blake was frightfully pale. Her lips were so dry and parched, poor child, that she could hardly form her words; but she managed to say to Mr. Bertie, 'Something must have happened: do go and look for him!'

Of course she had but given words to what each one was thinking, but there was a chorus of declaration that nothing could have happened. 'It was the mist; 'he was at the keeper's,'—anything you please. But Jack Eversley got up, and left the room quietly; and then the Berties went, and the General found himself assailed by all the ladies, and obliged to invent reasons for his non-appearance, and soothe their fears. Georgie said nothing, and sat close to the fire, holding Blanche's hand, while the little lady declared alternately that she was dying of fright, and felt quite faint, and that he would walk in, dressed for dinner when the gong rung.

But the gong did not ring, and only a shutting and opening of the hall-door was heard after some half-hour or so's nervous listening.

Georgie got up quietly, walked to the door of the boudoir, and opening it, looked out and listened. A step was coming along the passage, and old Sandy, deadly pale, came up to her.

'What is it, Sandy?' asked Miss Filmer, steadily.

He only moved his head, and seemed unable to speak; she pushed him aside, and went down the passage into the hall. Hearing her speak, and seeing her leave the room, all the other ladies had a sense of fear and coming evil. Blanche shrieked and rushed after her. Lucy Blake caught hold of her mother, and shook all over, and even Miss Gort ran on tiptoe to the door. The General followed her.

All was dark and quiet in the hall. The front door was ajar, and Georgie

opened it and stood there listening. The dull tramp of men's feet came nearer and nearer; the General and both the ladies whispered together in the hall.

'Can you not be quiet?' Georgie said, turning round suddenly on them. Then she made a step out on to the gravel, and met those whose steps were now close to her. A hand took hers in the darkness, and Arthur Bertie said 'You had better go in,' and led her into the house. 'You had better go in,' he repeated to the group that rushed up to him with eager exclamations; and struck with horror at they knew not what dread, they all retreated except Georgie, who stood back in the shadow of the doorway.

'I am alone now,' she said, half aloud; 'I am alone, and may stand by myself,' and yet she scarcely knew what she meant by her words. She saw them carry in their burden, and lay it gently down on the great stone slab in the hall, and she saw in the grey pallor of the faces round her what had happened. Scarcely a word was spoken, but when four of them made a movement to take up the body and carry it elsewhere, she came up and said 'Let me see him,' and they fell back without a word and let her look.

He was quite dead, with the stiff sweet smile of death fixed on his face.

'How was it?' she asked of the nearest to her. The man shook his head, and did not speak.

'His gun must have gone off and shot him,' Jack Eversley said, in a low voice; 'his foot must have slipped, we think.'

There was silence for a moment or two, and then Georgie turned away. Arthur Bertie came back from the boudoir, and found her holding on to the balustrade of the staircase, and he gave her his arm to help her up-stairs, but neither of them spoke a word till they reached her room; then he said, 'Shall I send any one to you?' She shook her head, and he added, 'We have telegraphed for Simon.'

Georgie had been quite calm, but as he said the last words a convulsive shudder passed through her,

and putting out her hands, she would have fallen if he had not caught her, and ringing for her maid left her in her room.

The doom had fallen: it must have been just twelve hours after the room had been opened that poor Frank had met his death. He was lying there on his back in the heather, not far from where he had left the luncheon party, just in view of the castle tower. His gun lay near him, discharged, and the shot had gone straight to the heart, and the broken, bruised heather above showed where he had missed his footing, and stumbled.

Simon Fraser came back. The party was broken up.

The party that had met in such high spirits dispersed in grief and horror.

Simon came back, and with Jack Eversley looked over all poor Frank's papers.

'Will you give her this?' he said, after glancing at a half-folded sheet of note-paper that was on the top of the desk.

'Why not give it yourself?'

Fraser shook his head.

'It has struck me more than once, Simon—perhaps I am doing her injustice—but it did strike me, and does so still, that poor Frank was ill-advised in his attachment to Miss Filmer. That is not what I meant to say when I began my sentence,' he added, as his companion did not reply. 'Do you know much of her?—I think you do.'

'Yes,' said Simon, quietly; 'I knew her some years ago very intimately.'

'So I fancied.'

Both were silent, and Eversley stood with the folded paper irresolutely by the door.

'I have no right to ask,' he said, presently, and then paused again.

Colonel Fraser had finished his inspection of the desk, and as he looked it he looked in his companion's face, and said, 'I suppose I know what you mean. Georgiana Filmer is the last woman I should think of asking to be my wife. Do not let me give you any prejudice against her; poor girl! she needs a

friend, and she has lost a true one in this poor boy.'

The paper had been written on the Sunday night when Frank had promised that the doom chamber should be unclosed. He had written it evidently just after leaving Georgie in the boudoir, and on the outside was scrawled 'If I die.'

'You see that I can give my life for your smallest wish,' he had written. 'I have only pain in thinking that you may regret what you said; do not regret; do not dream but that I love you too much not gladly to die, only grant me one thing—kiss me before they shut my coffin. I shall know it. Sometimes I have thought you did not care for me; I love you so intensely that I am jealous; when I am gone, think of me with affection.'

The paper was hastily written, and had but those few words, and Georgie read them with a blanched cheek, but with a slight bitter smile on her face.

'Will you take me to the room?' she said when she had finished reading it, and she and Eversley went together, and he stood musing sadly and strangely by the window while she touched the dead lips with hers. There was a look of hard misery on her face when she turned to leave the room, and Jack Eversley pitied her, knowing, as he did, all that might be in her mind. He took her hand when they were in the passage, and held it kindly as he said, 'One

has many a bitter lesson to learn in this life, Georgia, but it is no use looking back on evil days.'

She made no reply, but a sudden colour came over her face; she bent and kissed the hand that held hers, then turned into her own room and shut her door. Lady Blanche wept herself into quite a little illness; she and Jack went the week after to Kelso, and she told every one at the Caledonian hall that her charming black and white dress was worn for that dear, dear Mr. Fraser; and when the next season she met the General, and he asked her where was her charming and most interesting friend Miss Filmer, the fair lady said, 'Oh, Miss Filmer! really it was the greatest shame, but she was such a bad correspondent, she had not answered her last letter, and she really did not now know where she was. Yes, she had been very nice, hadn't she? and so handsome?'

The General found himself unusually popular as a side dish that winter, and told the 'sad story' with remarkable pathos and many annotations; and Miss Lucy, who went to Pau with her mother for change of scene, married a consumptive young clergyman the following spring, and plays her 'Leider ohne Worte' as a voluntary on the harmonium of his pretty little Lincolnshire church to this day.

Simon Fraser left the army. He is still unmarried.



BOATING LIFE AT OXFORD.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW WINGFIELD STEERED THE OXFORD EIGHT AND BAXTER ROWED 'FIVE.'

ON the morning after the bump-supper above described I was loafing round the Quadrangle, not feeling inclined, after the excitement of the previous evening, to do anything particular, when I met Hallett walking rapidly from the direction of the College-gate, and looking as if he were on some rather important business.

'Oh, Maynard,' he said, 'have you seen Baxter this morning? I dare say the lazy beggar's in bed.'

'Oh, no,' I replied, 'I met him just now going to breakfast with Vere on a red-herring and soda-water. He said he smoked a little too much last night, and a red-herring and tea, with soda-water to follow, always set him up better than anything else.'

'Hallett,' shouted a voice, which could belong to none but Baxter; and at the same moment a soda-water cork hit me smartly on the shoulder. We looked up and beheld Baxter and Vere, leaning, each with his elbows resting on a red cushion, from a window on the first floor above us.

'Oh, you're there, are you?' said Hallett; 'I've got some news for you.'

'Come up here and tell it, then. Come along, Maynard; you want some soda-water awfully, I can see.'

Up we went accordingly. Vere produced some more tumblers and soda-water, which we proceeded to uncork.

'Well, now, old man,' inquired Baxter, 'what's up?'

'The soda-water for one,' put in Vere, as the cork of the bottle he held flew up to the ceiling, followed by the contents.

'Why,' returned Hallett, with a passing smile at Vere's little joke, 'I've just been strolling round the parks, and met the gallant president of the O. U. B. C.* He said he was just coming to speak to me about

you. He wants to try you in the 'Varsity to-day instead of Pulteney.'

'By—Jove! you don't mean that, old fellow?'

'Yes; he says Pulteney's no more use than a corpse: they were loth to give him up, because he's a big man and rows in fair form; but they've come to the conclusion at last that he doesn't pull much more than the weight of his boots.'

'Ah, Tip told me the same thing after he steered them yesterday. Hang it, I wish I hadn't drunk so much soda-water; I shall be as weak as a baby when I get into the boat. Vere, you treacherous old serpent, it's your fault. Here I've had a chance given me of aquatic distinction, and your soda-water, sir, has robbed me of the golden prospect.'

'Yes,' said Vere, in a tone of deep contrition, 'and has even gone so far as to take away your "coppers."'

'Well, I'm going off to grind,' said Hallett; 'you'll be down at the river by half-past two, Baxter?'

'All right, my lad, I'll be there, and if I don't pull the weight of my boots—double-soled clumps, mind—and a pound or two over, I'll shoot myself to death with soda-water corks.'

So Baxter rowed 'Five' that day, and though his style was a little rough, and the debauch of the night before had, to use his own expression, 'played old Harry with his internal arrangements,' Singleton, the president, saw that, when the day of the race came, the new 'Five' would do good service for the dark-blue. The Eight had been already a few days in training, but it still wanted more than a month to the race-day, so that there was plenty of time for minor improvements of style; and, as Baxter went into training with a determination to do all he knew for his 'Varsity, it was not long before his 'feather' came down to the level of the rest of the crew, and his time was pronounced right

* Oxford University Boat Club.

as clockwork; and we of St. Anthony's felt very proud of our man, as we watched him with his great chest coming down between his knees for the stroke, and going back with a long swing like a sledge-hammer. For myself, I know that when I heard an old University oar say to a friend on the bank, 'By Jove! that man Five does more work than the rest of the boat put together,' I walked firmer on the ground for a week, and felt that to be a St. Anthony's man was among the highest privileges of this life.

Tom Percy, *alias* 'T. P.,' *alias* 'Tippy,' *alias* 'Tip,' had, as I mentioned before, steered the Oxford crew of the previous year; and as he had not increased more than three or four pounds in weight, it was a matter of course that he should be the coxswain for this year also. One Saturday, when the Eight had been in training about a fortnight, Tip, who was a great lover of racquets, and liked to test the skill of every freshman who knew anything of the game, invited me to play with him. When we had played five games, four of which I lost, and were performing ablutions after the exercise, Tip said in his sharp way, 'What are you going to do now? Come and ride: the Eight don't want me this afternoon, they've got old Parkes to steer them: it's the last holiday I shall have, too, for they go into the racing-boat on Monday, and I shall be wanted every day then. There, no humbug about grinding for smalls,' he continued, putting on his coat and hooking his arm into mine, 'we'll get a couple of nags at Joe Tollitt's, and I'll show you some of the country: he's got a little brown mare that suits me to a hair.'

Accordingly after lunch to Joe Tollitt's we went. Tip was much chagrined to find that the little brown mare was out; however, there were plenty of less attractive animals to pick from, and we were soon mounted on two of those rakish-looking, stick-at-nothing steeds that Oxford knows so well. Tip's notion of showing the country was to keep as far as possible from the high roads and never to ride for more

than ten minutes in the same direction. By carrying out this plan, what with interesting fences and exciting gallops, we soon lost all count of time; and it was not till Percy's horse had refused three fences in succession that we began to think of returning.

'I say,' said Tip, suddenly, 'it strikes me we ought to be getting back, the nags have had enough: I wonder where the deuce we are.'

"Oxford six miles," replied I, quoting the finger-post, as we came out at four cross-roads.

'I have to dine with the Eight at six,' said Tip, 'and it's a quarter past five now, and we have to take the horses back and dress: touch your mare up a bit; we must quicken the pace; we shall be awfully late as it is.'

By dint of constant stimulus we managed to put our horses along at something like the required pace, and were beginning to think we should not be very late after all, when, coming sharply round a corner, Percy's horse stumbled and fell, throwing his rider as heavily as seven stone ten can fall, into the road. By pulling my mare on to her haunches I barely avoided riding over him. Tip's horse was up directly; perhaps it was not his first adventure of the kind; but not so Tip. He lay perfectly still on his face for a minute or so, and I thought we should never hear our coxswain's sharp little voice again; but he came to directly, and then I asked him if he was much hurt. 'Cracked my arm,' he replied; 'get me to some farm-house, if you can, my lad.' Though he spoke in something like his old authoritative tone, I could see he was faint with pain. What was I to do? It would not do to set off with the little man in my arms in search of a hospitable farmer, leaving the two horses to their own devices; so at last I was fain to lay Tip with his saddle under him against the bank at the roadside, and set off on my own horse to fetch assistance. I was not long in finding a couple of farm-labourers to help me, and between us we brought both Percy and the horses to a comfortable homestead in the

neighbourhood. In less than an hour we had found a surgeon; the arm was set, the head bandaged up, and Tip declared himself to be 'as right as ninepence.' 'This knocks my steering on the head, though,' he continued, in a doleful tone.

'Come,' interposed the surgeon, 'you'll have the goodness to go to sleep, sir, and don't talk about steering till I've steered you through this little business; and, Mr. Maynard, I'll thank you to be off and tell the story to your friends at St. Anthony's.'

It was past eight when I reached the College. I went first to Baxter's rooms, and found him just returned from dining with the Eight, and lighting his lamp in preparation for the severest of grinds.

'I'm afraid I'm disturbing you,' said I.

'Oh, no, young un, come in; I'm just preparing for an enlightened study of the Nicomachean Ethics by the help of Mr. Browne's translation; a regular *Browne* study, in fact, as Vere would say; but I'm not in harness yet—coat to change, slippers, and general derangement of dress to come; so sit down: take the easy chair.'

'Thanks; I won't stay five minutes, but I've got something to tell you. I've been out for a ride with Percy.'

'And got spilt, eh?' said Baxter. 'I thought by your look there was something up.'

'No, not exactly,' I replied, 'but Percy has come rather to grief—broken his arm.'

'You don't mean that; poor dear little Tip! Where is he now?'

'I've left him in good hands at a farmer's three miles off on the Banbury road. He didn't seem to care much, excepting that, as he said, it's all up with his steering for this year.'

'Yes, by Jove!' exclaimed Baxter, 'and I don't know where the Varsity will find another cox. The men who steered the trial Eights are no good; neither of them knows even how to keep his lines taut, much less steer on a broad water like the Thames. I tell you what, I shouldn't wonder if our little Tom Thumb, what's his name—?'

'Wingfield?' said I.

'Yes, to be sure, Wingfield. Ever since that little ducking he got he's steered splendidly. I'll speak to Singleton to-morrow, and get him tried at any rate. Now, young un, I think I must trouble you to be off, for it's time I tackled the venerable Stagirite. You'd better let Hallett know all about poor Tip.'

'Yes; I'll go to him at once.'

'Ah, do. Good-night.'

'Good-night.'

Next day Wingfield was tried as coxswain, as well as one or two others, who were considered likely men; and for three or four days it was not settled who should fill the vacant seat in the stern of the boat. Wingfield, meantime, was fluttering between exultation at having steered the Varsity even for a day, and the fear lest he should be rejected after all. At last, after steering the Eight over the long course one day, he said to me, 'Tell you what, Maynard, they really ought to have me after my steering to-day: don't laugh; I tell you I *know* Tom Percy couldn't have taken them better. What are you grinning at? You old duffer, you don't know good steering when you see it. Here's Baxter; I'll just ask him. Now, Baxter, wasn't my steering first-rate to-day?'

'Well, I suppose it must have been,' returned Baxter, 'for I've just had orders to tell you you're to be cox. of the Eight.'

'Hurrah! I told you so, Maynard. I knew I steered well. Hurrah!' And off the small man went, in a joyous trot, that expressed better than any words the height of his glee and exultation.

Having lived in the country all my life till I came to St. Anthony's, and my interest in the Oxford and Cambridge race never having gone beyond betting '3 to 2 in tizzies' with my chums at school, I had never yet had the luck to witness what the daily papers always call 'the struggle for the blue riband of the Thames.' Now, however, I felt that to see The Race was one of the necessities of life; and accordingly, I availed myself of a general invita-

tion, given me long ago by one of my uncles, to spend the week but one before Easter at his house at Kensington.

The Eight had been three days on the London water when I reached town, on the Monday before the race. Next day I ran down to Putney to see how things were going on, and saw our boat come in, after rowing the whole course. There was a little knot of men waiting to see the crew step ashore—two or three newspaper correspondents, University men, watermen, and a few others. It was curious to see the different ways the men had of getting out of the boat. Stroke and Bow tried, without much success, to look as if a four-mile row were to them a mere bagatelle; 'Three' and 'Four,' on the other hand, sat for a minute or two with their heads sunk down to their knees, as though they never meant to row again, and then rose slowly, and walked off with the air of martyrs who felt that they were sacrificing their lives by inches on the altar of patriotism. As for Baxter, he hitched up his trousers in a subdued way, and tumbled out anyhow, with two or three puffs and snorts, and without the least regard for appearances; while Wingfield displayed in every motion a deep sense of his dignity and responsibility, as Coxswain of the Oxford Eight.

'Hallo, young 'un!' exclaimed Baxter, suddenly, as his 'eye fell upon me, 'are you there? Come to see your friends perform, eh?'

'Yes,' said I; 'how do you get on?'

'All right, as far as I'm concerned: Three and Four have been rather seedy the last day or two; but they'll be fit enough by Saturday.'

'And what about Cambridge?' I inquired.

'Oh, they came to town yesterday: you'll see them come in directly; they're disgustingly good this year. They say their Stroke's a man of undying pluck—so's our man, for that matter; hard as nails, and the coolest oar out. It will be a ve-ry tough race, you'll see.'

'May I ask, sir, what your time was to-day?' said one of the gentlemen of the Press, addressing Baxter, note-book in hand.

'Fifteen minutes twenty seconds, on a slack tide,' replied Baxter, promptly, with a scarcely perceptible wink at me.

'Indeed, sir; thank you. And what should you consider to be the betting now, sir?'

'Three to one on Oxford.'

'Indeed, sir; thank you; much obliged. Good-day, sir.'

'We shall see all that in one of the penny papers to-morrow morning,' said Baxter: 'you wouldn't think he could take all that in, would you? Just shows how much those fellows' information is good for: they get crammed up with some startling particulars now and then.'

Wingfield, who had been superintending, as he thought himself in duty bound, the removal of the boat to its shelter for the night, now joined us.

'How do, Maynard?' he said, with a lively nod. 'Baxter, get away and wash; don't stand there, catching your death of cold; I'll tell Maynard all about everything. Now go on, there's a good fellow.'

'All right, Tommy; I'm off. By-by, my lad,' to me; and Baxter went off to wash, as he was bid. It was clear that a change had taken place in the relations of the small to the big man: the former had become—at least in his own estimation—an absolute but beneficent ruler; the latter a sober-minded and submissive subject. After some conversation with Wingfield, during which he offered me a ticket for the Umpire's boat, and recommended me to go to Evans's either the night before or the night after the race, on account of the splendid row there was sure to be, as if he knew all about it from the experience of a lifetime, we parted, breathing devout wishes for the success of the dark-blue colours on the coming Saturday morning.

Friday evening found me, for the first time in my life, at Evans's, under the protection of Vere, whom I had happened to meet a day or

two before at a cigar-shop in the Strand, buying what he called 'Herba Nicotiana, vulgo appellata Tobacco.' Most people know what Evans's supper-rooms are like. The room being filled almost entirely with Oxford and Cambridge men, all having their thoughts fixed on the coming race, the excitement soon ran high; and when a well-known singer came forward and gave us a spirited stave, appropriate to the occasion, extolling alternately the dark and light blue, party enthusiasm reached its highest pitch. I was greatly excited myself, and so was Vere; I shall not, therefore, attempt to describe all the events of the evening. My impression is, that a great deal of glass was smashed; that several appeals were made by at least two proprietors (Vere said there was only one); that the waiters had a very bad time of it altogether; and that my hat, when I got out into the street after a severe struggle, had assumed the contour of the 'shocking bad' article which adorns the head of the Irish carman.

Fortunately I was not obliged to rise very early next morning, as the race was to start a little before eleven, and I had not far to go. Vere had engaged a horse to ride along the towing-path; so I started by myself, got on board the steamer early, and managed to secure a good place to view the race.

It was a clear sunshiny day, with a light breeze blowing rather cool from the west, and the attendance of spectators, both on land and water, was enormous. Not to mention the steamers, of which there were five or six, mostly crammed almost to sinking point, the river from Putney bridge to Simmons' boat-house was gay with small craft of all descriptions, cockney crews with the liveliest uniforms and the worst possible styles of rowing, pale government clerks adventuring their lives, and, still worse, their unexceptionable straw hats in skiffs of frail construction, young tradesmen in their shirt-sleeves and shiny hats toiling in heavy tubs to the admiration of their sweethearts in the stern. Here and there the bright blue of the

London Rowing Club or the scarlet of Kingston might be seen in a graceful outrigger four, and one boat, that I particularly noticed, was rowed by four young ladies in blue jackets, straw hats, and white kid gloves, who looked very charming and excited much admiration. The banks were lively too, though not so gay as at some other parts nearer the finish; the ladies were not so numerous here or so well dressed, but the bright faces of the crowd, the bits of colour here and there lighting up the dark masses, as men in various uniforms moved in and out among the throng with the clear sunlight brightening up the whole, gave things a cheery, holiday look, that calmed to some extent the intense anxiety I was beginning to feel about the issue of the coming race. I could hear from time to time the shouts on the bank, as we dodged about trying to get into our proper position. 'Oxford or Cambridge colours three-pence.'—'I'll give 5 to 4 on Oxford; will any gentleman take 5 to 4?'—'Boat, sir? Here you are, sir—take the three on yer for 'arf-a-crown.'—'Want to see the start, sir?—try my little boat, sir.'—'Will any gentleman take 5 to 4?' &c.

The two boats came out a little after the appointed time, looking very stately and beautiful, as they paddled quietly to their starting-rafts, with cheers rising to greet them on all sides as they moved along. While the usual manœuvring of the refractory steamers was going on, my eyes were fixed on my two friends in the Oxford boat. Baxter looked in splendid condition, but, as time went on, and the start was still delayed, he grew uncomfortable, gripping his oar nervously, hitching up his trousers, and settling himself on his thwart in a way that showed he was far from easy in his mind. Wingfield, on the other hand, sat with his legs tucked in, and his hands tightly grasping the rudders, pale, but looking as though his whole soul and body were bent up to one object, and seeming quite insensible to everything beside. At last 'those confounded steamers' were got into something like order,

except one dingy low-lived monster, which lay in shore some distance ahead of the rest, and was utterly intractable. Each man in the two crews took a last look round, settled himself for the last time on his thwart, strung himself up, and came forward ready for the stroke: the starter gave the word and both boats sprang off together. The roar that broke forth at once from all sides telegraphed far up the river that the race had begun; the crowd on the bank stood still for a moment, and then began to move in one direction; the small craft became generally excited; the steamers groaned and snorted; while, above all, the cries of 'Cambridge!' 'Oxford!' rose into the air, sometimes sharp and clear, sometimes blending in one dull surging roar. And so the race swept on, the two slender boats with their long gleaming oars forging on in the midst, and holding their course in spite of heaving waters, insolent steamers, and cockney wherries. For the first dozen strokes they seemed almost dead level, then Cambridge, rowing the faster stroke, began to go slowly ahead. 'Cambridge!' 'Cambridge!' was the cry, answered by 'Now, Oxford!' 'Oxford!' in a tone of remonstrance. But our stroke did not quicken, and still the light-blue kept creeping to the front. At the Soap-works they were half a length ahead, and as we neared Hammer-smith they had drawn clear.

'I'll give 6 to 4 on Cambridge,' shouted some one near me.

'I'll take you,' replied a voice that I knew well. I looked round and saw, for the first time, that Hallett was standing within a few yards of me. We exchanged nods, and then turned to, and shouted 'Oxford!' vigorously. Then I saw our stroke turn his head and take a look after his foe, and then his broad chest came forward in quicker time, and his oar flashed faster over the water; the boat seemed to start into fresh life, and inch by inch the lost ground was made up, and, amid exulting cries of 'Oh! well rowed, Oxford!' our boat drew up level once more.

'Will you do that 6 to 4 over

again, sir?' said Hallett to the man near him.

'Not just now, sir,' returned the other in a rather surly tone. 'Now Cambridge!' Cambridge answered the call by another spurt, and began once more to shoot ahead amid tremendous cheering. But our men were not to be denied, spurt answered spurt, and each boat alternately headed the other, while the roars and yells and even shrieks that rose from land and water swelled into a perfect storm. The boats shot Barnes bridge together; less than a mile and the race would be over. Which would win? It was a splendid fight, but the anxiety was almost past bearing. At last the final effort came. The steamers were by this time a good way in the rear, but through a glass I could see that the dark-blue was once more going to the fore; they were gaining steadily every stroke; they must win.

'Oxford wins!' shouted Hallett, now close beside me, 'Oxford!—hurrah! Hallo! look there—what's that? There's a barge coming right across them—they'll be swamped! Why the devil doesn't Wingfield take 'em round? Oh, d—n it, they'll lose the race! There they go—they must be—no, by Jove! they're just in time—hurrah! it's all right! Oh well steered, sir—judged it beautifully—well steered—Oxford wins!'

It had been a very near thing, but the race was safe now, and with cries of 'Oxford!' 'Oxford!' rising louder and louder from every side the dark-blue shot past the flag at Mortlake, winners by three lengths.

'Oxford colours threepence, Cambridge colours one penny' were the first words Hallett and I heard, as we stepped ashore at Putney; and didn't I wear my colours proudly all that glorious afternoon! I shall never forget that race, and I don't think anybody who saw it will ever forget it either. In St. Anthony's at least it is 'freshly remembered;' and if you want to stir the soul of an old rowing man of St. Anthony's, ask him if he remembers the year when Wingfield steered and Baxter rowed Five.



THE HEART HATH A WORLD OF ITS OWN.

[See Page 55.]

THE HEART HATH A WORLD OF ITS OWN.

(WITH AN ILLUSTRATION.)

THOUGH the sapphire skies be studded ;
 Though the night be crowned with the moon ;
 If the soul be chained to December,
 What boots it to speak of June ?
 Doth the month command the summer ?
 Can a word bring warmth at will ?—
 Add heat to the flickering firelight ?
 For my lady's heart is chill.
 Can the songs that reposing Nature
 Softly repeats in her dreams ;
 The nightingale's lay in the thicket,
 And the tinkling flow of the streams ;
 The manifold voice of the ocean,
 When his ripples are loud as his roar,
 Whilst with this he washes the headland,
 And with those he kisses the shore :
 Can the rest of the sighing breezes,
 As they breathe their sweet last in the bowers,
 Or lull, on the calm-lying moorlands,
 The scented sleep of the flowers :
 Can the spirit of beauty that mirrors
 The sprite-like stars in the seas :
 Can the mystical silence of Heaven,
 Or the hush of the world, bring peace ?
 They may, if the heart be at quiet ;
 They may, if the soul be at rest ;
 If not, they are lightning and thunder,
 And tempest and turmoil unblest.
 Let these wage their uttermost riot ;
 So the heart with its thoughts be at one,
 It laughs at their vain-sounding fury ;
 For the heart hath a world of its own.
 Is there peace in the heart of my lady ?
 Is there peace in the words we may trace
 As we peer o'er the ivory shoulder,
 Or read off the eloquent face ?
 Alas ! that so radiant a beauty
 Should be bound to so grave concern ;
 That the flush that was meant for affection
 To the shadow of shame should turn !
 Yet she reads not a line of upbraiding,
 Though she hath misused her might ;
 And, where she meant but to trifle,
 Hath crushed, in her own despite.
 Ah ! fairest of ladies, take comfort,
 Though the phrase be measured and strange,
 He, loving thee once, loves for ever ;
 Loves ever, and knows not change.
 Yet cannot he love the unlovely ;
 And his words must be fettered and cold,
 Till thou hast recovered thy nature,
 And frankly hast smiled as of old :
 For the outraged heart must shelter,
 And the wounded and yearning soul
 Must hide even tropical passion
 Neath the outer ice of the pole.

A. H. G.

PLAYING FOR HIGH STAKES.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BY THE LAKE.

THE mare which Mr. Talbot had declared to be 'too slight for Bathurst' had carried that gentleman far away from the brothers long before the conversation which has just been recorded had come to a close. She had visibly flagged, as has been narrated, on a piece of marshy, spongy turf, and then she had got herself together, and gallantly borne him over a hurdle and away on a slightly sloping piece of ground into the extreme edge of the Haldon parkland. Then he had pulled up, quoting to himself the line 'This is the place—stand still, my steed. Let me review the most eligible way of getting back to the house without falling in with those fellows again. I don't want that now.' This he said to himself breathlessly, looking about him for a short cut back to the house. Presently he saw one that looked promising—an elm-tree avenue in full foliage, through which he could gallop unobserved by any one who might be on the high lands adjoining. 'Oh, ride as though you were flying!' He sang out the refrain of the brilliant Irish ballad heartily as the mare bounded into her stride, and the goal he sought was brought nearer to him each instant. As he went along, conscious of looking well in the blue unclouded weather, swinging easily and gracefully to each movement of the mare's, he felt rather sorry that Blanche was not near to see him; and the feeling was not an extraordinarily conceited one under the circumstances, for with his Glengarry bent down low over his brow, his handsome fair face glowing with the sun and the exercise, and his bold blue eyes brilliant with excitement, he was no unworthy object merely from the artistic point of view.

A groom came out as he clattered hastily into the yard, and as the mare was led off with heaving sides

and seething flanks, he turned to go towards the house, and met Blanche.

'What a mad rider you are, Frank!' she said, reproachfully; 'why such haste when the very air is languid? How you have heated that poor horse!'

'I was anxious to get back,' he said. And then Blanche tried to pass on nearer to the horse, and he offered her his arm to stop her progress. 'Never mind the mare now; she has been on probation to-day. I have been putting her through all her paces, in order to see whether she will suit you or not. I have decided that she will suit you—so she is yours.'

She shook her head.

'You are really gorgeous in your generosity, Frank—a sort of man who would order round "more carriages" with as grand a grace as the Irish magnate did. She must not be mine, however, the pretty darling. I should have a slight difficulty in keeping her in furnished lodgings in town.'

They had sauntered slowly out of the yard while she had been speaking; and now they had reached a bend in the drive from whence two paths—one leading direct to the house, the other bearing away to the lake—diverged. She half inclined to to the former path, but he whispered—

'No, no! come down by the lake.'

'I am afraid of a sun-stroke,' she said, putting her hand up to her bare head as she spoke. 'I rushed out without a hat to get a few flowers; and then I saw you, and forgot my flowers in the agitation your furious riding caused me.'

'There's a depth of shade under that old ilex that will secure you from all fear of sun-stroke. Do come, Blanche.'

He moved on with his left hand clasping hers as it rested on his

right arm, and she was constrained to go with him.

'What have you done with the Talbots?' she asked.

'Oh! never mind the Talbots,' he replied.

'But I do mind about them particularly,' and then—she could only think it, she dared not speak as one who knew—she went on: 'I am afraid things are not going as well with Mr. Talbot as his friends could wish.'

'I am afraid that there is something wrong with Master Edgar,' he replied, carelessly, 'but he's such a queer, close fellow, one can never make out what he's after; however, as our thinking about it won't help him, we had better not think about it, eh?'

'Frank, you are so funnily selfish,' she said, laughing; 'there is a grain of truth and honesty at the bottom of every selfish remark you make which causes me to regard it more leniently than I should otherwise do, sir; still you are selfish, and it is a pity.'

'I will take the rest of your rebukes sitting down, if you will allow me,' he replied, smiling; 'there is a place for you, here on this mound by the roots—the light falls on your chignon in a most marvellous manner, and your face will be in shade; so! may I sit here?'

He seated himself close by her side, even as he asked it; leant on his elbow, and looked up very lovingly into her face. 'I wish you would let me go and get my hat,' she exclaimed, turning her face slightly away from his bent, earnest gaze.

'No, no, no!'

'There you are! selfish again! it pleases you that I should sit here and scorch my brains because the light falls, as it seems good to you that it should fall, on my chignon.'

'Blanche! not for that only.'

His tone was a little more serious than any she had ever heard from him before. She looked round at him quickly and scrutinisingly, and then she said—

'For some equally frivolous reason, then, I am sure!' Then, 'Forgive me, Frank, for saying that. I really

beg your pardon, but you are so much what a brother would be to me that I cannot help talking to you as if you were my brother.'

'I don't seem to care to see that sentiment strengthened,' he said, drily.

'I am sorry for that, for it has been strengthening daily from the day I saw you first.'

'What did you think of me when you saw me first?'

'I almost forget—no, I do not—I liked you, and felt as well disposed towards you as one does towards the majority of people. Natural affection does not develop in an instant, you know.'

'I don't care what natural affection does, but the immortals love each other at first sight, and love is of them.'

'I am sure I shall get a sun-stroke,' Blanche said, hurriedly; 'if you would only let me go and get my hat I should like you so much?'

'Perhaps you would not come back?'

'Yes, I would.'

'Perhaps you would not come back alone?'

'Well, it may occur to you to remember that Miss Talbot may find it dull alone with mamma.'

'Not a bit of it; she will find it delightful with mamma; at any rate, I find it delightful that she should be up there with mamma while I am here with you. Come, Blanche, don't be so restless: you give your society for hours to Talbot or to Lal, and you grudge me a few minutes. I want to talk to you about——'

'About what?' she interrupted, laughing. 'I can tell you, without your taking any trouble: you want me to speak to you of "Tannhäuser," without waiting for any replies from you; you wish to enjoy the sun in silence, and as you know that I am well contented to hear myself speak, you will condescend to listen to me.' She tried to rattle on, without giving him the opportunity of saying a word; but he divined her motive, and frustrated it.

'Quite the reverse,' he said. 'As a rule, you are right in supposing that while you spoke I could desire no

better occupation than to hear you; but on this occasion I want to speak, and you must listen.'

'How well the house looks from here,' she said.

'Yes; the remark is peculiarly relevant to the point I was discussing, is it not?' he answered, smiling. 'Queer it is that we should be sitting here looking at the house that would have been your own if you had not been over-proud and over-generous to me.'

'Not over-generous to you. I knew nothing of you: you were a name to me. "Bathurst's boy" papa used to call you.' Then the remembrance of the proposition that had been made with regard to 'Bathurst's boy' by herself about herself shot across her mind, and she blushed and laughed.

'The man is very grateful for the good you gave the boy,' he said, softly; 'I almost feel as if I owed myself to you, Blanche. What an obscure fellow I should have been if you had seen and conquered old Mr. Lyon!'

'Poverty, or, at any rate, want of wealth is not necessarily "obscurity,"' she replied.

He shrugged his shoulders, as if he rather doubted the truth of that aphorism.

'You would have been an equally good, and perhaps a far greater, man if you had been left to your own devices, Frank, than you will ever be now; you have nothing to be grateful to me for.'

'Give me something to be grateful for,' he said, winningly; and he put his white, well-shaped hand on hers as he spoke. 'Will you give me something to be grateful for? will you, Blanche?'

'Yes; I will give you excellent advice—do not resent it. Remember what I said to you the other day when we were all down here—recall the spell I repeated, and the remark I made about it.'

'Is that your advice?'

'Yes.'

'Why do you offer it?'

'Why, indeed!' she said, with an assumption of a careless air. 'I think I can give you a cogent reason, though. I should like to see

you grow earnest, for, as I told you, "the heart may not be thine" until you do so; and it is a pity to wait over long for it, for Trixy's heart would be well worth having.'

'Is that your advice—that I should endeavour to gain Miss Talbot's heart?' he asked, and if he had not been Frank Bathurst he would have looked mortified. Being himself, he merely threw an additionally imploring expression into his eyes—an expression which Blanche steadily resisted, for reasons that have been already assigned.

'Indeed I do—if you can.'

He threw himself back with an air of confidence on the subject that was not quite pleasing to the woman who loved Trixy Talbot's brother. 'Frank, you are woefully conceited, I am afraid,' she said, reproachfully; 'and I feel rather guilty, for I know that I have aided in making you so.'

'No, not at all; your conscience is quite clear on that score,' he replied, almost bitterly; 'you have been kind to me; but this morning you are determined, for some reason or other, to make your manner counterbalance all that kindness. I feel very much rebuffed.'

'Now you make me feel guilty of injustice, folly, and rudeness. Why should I rebuff you? To me you are all that the kindest brother could be; let me regard you as such, Frank; it will be such a comfort to me.'

'But it will be no comfort to me,' he replied. 'It is all very well, Blanche, but platonic affection breaks down between friends, and fraternal affection will not answer between cousins, when I am one and you the other party concerned; if I had never seen you, I should have fallen in love with Trixy Talbot; but I have seen you, and I'm a gone 'coon.'

She would not take it as a declaration; she would not allow him to suppose that she could for one moment think he intended it to be expressive of a desire to marry her. She did not belong to that order of women who look upon every word, even of avowed affection, as a step towards the altar. So now she

began to sing out, sweetly and blithely, the words:

Thy words of courtly flattery, such fall like morning dew;
For oh! love takes another turn, the tender and the true.

Liking light as ours was never meant to last;
It was a moment's phantasy, and as such it has passed.

And when she sang that, Frank very wisely resolved to cease from further tender treatment of his subject that day.

But he was very far from giving up his point; for all his gay, light manner, for all that habit of seeming never to care for one thing long, he had great tenacity of purpose, especially when, as in this case, obstacles arose where least they had been expected. The hare that doubled most frequently was the one he most cared to course; the deer that gave the hounds a hard run was the one he loved to follow; and the woman 'who warned the touch while winning the sense' was the one he wished to woo, and win, and wed.

'Is she afraid of being seriously regarded too soon?' he said, coaxingly, when Blanche had quite finished her little strain. 'Melodious Mentor! tell me the way to be tender and true according to your song.'

'Like "the Douglas,"' she exclaimed, eagerly changing the topic. '"Douglas, Douglas tender and true!" Oh! those dear old border ballads. Why have we no bard to sing likewise in these days? In place of those genuine rhythms we get verses of society that small critics are good enough to call "Prædesque." Poor, maligned Præd! why should he be made to father such folly?'

'As what?'

'As the tinkling lines that choke the magazines. We have lost our gallantry—our good gallantry, I mean; the "idea" flourishes still. We have lost our guileless belief in the "brave and noble," and so none are found to sing it. We have lost our genuineness in most things, and specially in the artistic part of our nationality, have we not, Frank?'

'I have not given my mind to

the subject very seriously,' he replied, demurely; 'but I do not think that we have lost our "go" in poetry or in any other branch of art; there is an immense amount of fervid trash written and published, but a few young lights are rising up whose blaze is hot and clear.'

'But no one to be compared with Scott, or Byron, or Shelley—whom I don't half understand.'

'Scott, whom you mention now with such wholesome awe, was named less reverently by his compeer in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers":—

"And Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, all forgot,
Resign their hallowed bays to Walter Scott."

"Time tries all," you know. A few of those whom you now look upon as producers of mere "tinkling lines" may be found to have good metal in them before the century is old.'

'I wonder whether there is anything in it all?' she said, in a low voice. 'Sometimes it all seems such vanity and vexation of spirit, and nothing is worth anything, and all is emptiness. Were the mighty men of old happy, I wonder? Homer did not enjoy life a bit more for his works living on through all the ages. Do you think he was happy?'

'I should not be surprised to hear he was not,' Frank answered, lazily. 'The fellow who wrote the "Art of Love" (from experience, let us suppose), must have had a jolly time of it; but the knowledge that he is to be learnt a few hundred years hence by little boys who object to you can hardly add to any man's happiness.'

'Frank,' Blanche Lyon said, suddenly turning her head towards him as he lounged at her side, 'you're nice, and witty, and shallow—frightfully shallow. I am sure if I had been a man I would have done something good with my life, for I have a horror of hearing the little things that we say in joke about the mighty things that have been. I lack veneration for many things, I know that, but I do respect so many things that you treat facetiously because you fail to understand them.'

'That's all Lionel Talbot talk—

treated accordingly,' he said, laughing. 'Lal is a charming fellow, with an immense fund of faith in the true and the beautiful, and all the things that are generally written with capital initial letters; and you have picked up some of his notions. "Done something good with your life if you had been a man," would you? What a boon it is to the rest of us that you are only a woman, and so not that colossal bore, a shining example! Here's a chance for your ameliorating the mental condition of your suffering fellow-creatures still—do something good with my life. I am quite ready to place it in your hands.'

'Were my brain steady I might think of accepting the charge, Frank, but the sun has been too much for me. "Oh! ilex tree—oh! ilex tree, how faithless are thy branches!" They have let the rays in upon me, so that, if you would not see me grow red and unbecoming, you will let me go in out of the way of them.'

'It is a mistake to say "man never is but always to be blessed;" that applies especially to women,' Frank said, impatiently. 'I thought we were very happy here, so of course you find it too hot. Well, I am your slave, Blanche; we will go in, if you like. I will always do what you like.'

He had taken both her hands, and was lifting her up from her sitting posture as he spoke, and she was looking up gladly and gratefully into his face—gladly and gratefully! and he fully deserved that she should shower such glances upon him, for he had been very generous in saying no more when she had given him to understand that he had said enough. As she fairly balanced herself, and stood steadily upon her feet, Lionel came over the crest of the bank that rose up from the water, and Blanche blushed with the miserable consciousness that beset her of seeming other than she was; and the two men felt that the trip to Algeria, which Lionel had contemplated, would be a desirable thing after all.

CHAPTER XIX.

'THOU ART SO NEAR, AND YET
SO FAR.'

When Mr. Talbot went back to Haldon, leaving Lionel leaning against a hurdle, he (Edgar) was, as has been told, in no pleasant mood. He had suggested that his brother should bear the burden of the bad news to his sister, and his brother had, in all single-mindedness, pointed out to him that to do so was his, the elder's, part. Mr. Talbot was far from feeling convinced that this was the case; at the same time he was equally far from being capable of again hinting his desires on the subject. Accordingly, he went back to the house just about the time that Frank Bathurst and Blanche emerged from the yard, and the glimpse he caught of that pair lazily sauntering away towards the water did not brighten his temper or his bearing.

He found Beatrix sitting by the open window, down on the threshold of it, in fact, in the same position she had occupied on the previous night, when Frank Bathurst had faced her—looking eloquently all his fervent admiration for her hair and eyes. She had a little work-basket on her lap, and an open book on a chair immediately by her side. But she was neither reading nor working actively—she was thinking, and her thoughts interfered with her executive power.

'Can I speak to you here, without being liable to Mrs. Lyon at any moment?' he asked, lifting up the open book and placing himself on the chair by her side. 'If not, come away somewhere else, Trixy.'

'I can account for Mrs. Lyon for the next hour; she has gone down to the village, to look at a cottage that is to let.'

'What on earth for?'

'Blanche—Miss Lyon told her this morning that a friend of hers might possibly want a small country-house soon; and Mrs. Lyon, it seems, delights in house-hunting. So she made inquiries of the servants, heard of this cottage, and has gone off to look at it.'

'And can you account for the others?' he asked, carelessly; but he watched her with furtive keenness as she began trifling with the contents of her work-basket, and answered—

'Miss Lyon has gone out to gather flowers—the others went out with you, did they not?'

'She is gathering flowers that bloom unseen by us, then, for I saw her going down to the lake with Bathurst as I came in. However, that is not what I wanted to tell you, Trixy. The truth is, things have gone very badly with me, and it is time you should know it, as you will be a sufferer.'

She looked up, startled and affected as much by the tenderness with which he addressed her, as by the tidings his words conveyed; but before she had said anything he went on in a peevish tone—

'Don't go white and red about it. Of all things I hate a scene. The less said about my business the better, since no amount of talking can possibly set it straight. I have been unfortunate to an extraordinary degree, having lost not only my own money but all Lionel's and a good deal of Mark Sutton's into the bargain——'

She interrupted him here by holding her face up to kiss him; as he bent down to her he saw that her eyes were full of tears.

'For mercy's sake don't cry, Beatrix,' he muttered. 'I can stand anything better than women's tears. It is hard on you—very hard on you, I allow that, but you shall feel the change as little as possible; that I swear.'

'Oh! Edgar, do you believe that I am thinking of myself?' she asked, reproachfully.

'Of course I do—it is only natural and human that you should think of yourself. It is a bad thing for you; a very bad thing. In a little time, had I been able to hold on, you would probably have been independent of me. Is that chance over, Trixy?—tell me honestly.'

'What chance?' she asked, cringing painfully.

'We have come to such a pass that it is feeble of you to attempt

to evade my natural anxiety about you out of false delicacy. How do you stand with Bathurst?'

'Edgar! how can you ask me? If I stood in any other relation to him than is apparent to all the world should I not have told you? or rather, would he not have told you so?'

'I am not so sure of that—about him, at least,' Edgar Talbot said, shaking his head. 'Now, look here, Trixy—you like him; of that I am sure. I shall more bitterly regret my loss of fortune on your account than I do already if it were the means of separating you from him. I have been very plain-spoken with you—far more so than I should have been if I did not feel that, even at some cost of fine feeling to you, I am bound to make you all the reparation I can make. Be equally candid with me. Would it not be agreeable to your wishes to live down here for a time with the Lyons, rather than to return to a less comfortable home in London than you have known hitherto?'

'To live down here!—no, no, no!'

'Not here at Haldon, but in the village. I am the one Miss Lyon had in her mind when she spoke of some friend of hers possibly soon requiring country quarters.'

'How did she know?'

'Because I told her last night.'

'How you all rely on her judgment,' Trixy cried out, bitterly. 'I thought till now that it was only Lionel and Mr. Bathurst who turned to her on all occasions, as if she were the best guide, philosopher, and friend they could possibly have. Now I find you give her your confidence before you give it to me.'

'Circumstances compelled me to give her my confidence. I want her mother to continue with you still,' he answered, evasively. 'And now tell me—what objection have you to remaining down in this neighbourhood, provided a suitable house can be found? Victoria Street must go—I tell you that fairly; and I do not think it will be to your interest or to mine to take you into an inferior metropolitan locality; besides, it will be cheaper here.'

‘Why not some other neighbourhood?’ she urged.

‘And why some other neighbourhood?’ he replied. ‘It will save time, trouble, and money if I can establish you here with the Lyons; should any change arise it will be easy to take you away.’

‘What change are you contemplating?’

‘Well, to put it broadly, and in such a way that we may both fully understand the other—should Bathurst marry Blanche Lyon, I can quite feel with you that the village would be no fitting residence for you; but we do not know that this is likely to be; and therefore, unless the plan is positively painful to you, I shall ask you for my sake to agree to it.’

‘I submit entirely to your judgment,’ she said, coldly. It seemed to her that her brother was betraying a callousness as to her feelings in the matter which lessened his claims on her affection, however it might be about her obedience. He was evidently determined to play her—his last card, however much she might suffer in the publicity of such staking, and however keenly she might be wounded if he lost. Plainly as he had spoken to her, she had not been able to bring herself to speak with equal plainness to him in return. He had assumed that she was in love with Mr. Bathurst, and she had not denied the assumption. On the other hand, she had not acquiesced in it even when he had said that he ‘could quite feel with her that the village would be no fitting residence for her in the event of Bathurst’s marrying Blanche Lyon.’

Inconsistent as it may appear, after the cool manner of her submission having been commented upon, Beatrix Talbot was conscious of being glad that she was not to be entirely removed from the society of the man she loved. The inconsistency is admitted, and the artistic propriety of it defended, for in real life the great majority are consistent only in inconsistency of feeling, if not of action. Some subtle adjustment of her sentiments regarding Frank Bathurst made her glad that

she was not to be taken away from his atmosphere altogether; at the same time, she was sorry that any other than himself should have proposed her remaining in it. Moreover, she was partially rejoiced and partially grieved, in some intricate way, that this social convulsion was coming about. Matters reassert themselves differently after such throes and dissolvings of former habits; and she argued, after the manner of women, that the worst which certainly might ensue would be better than this unquiet in which her heart now dwelt. So she thought, comforting herself for a few moments after her last speech to her brother, and then she began to stab herself again by picturing what she should do, and how she should feel if, after she was safely settled in the cottage with the Lyons, Mr. Bathurst came and took one of the inhabitants thereof away, leaving her (Trixy) to solace Mrs. Lyon’s declining years. It was not a pleasing picture, but it did not last longer, fortunately, than such painful mental paintings are wont to do. A sweeter subject, in more glowing hues, spread itself over the canvas of her mind presently, as she thought of the night before, and how he had looked at her when he had declared himself to ‘be sympathetic, whatever Blanche might say to the contrary.’

‘Edgar, I will live wherever you wish me to live, and be as happy as possible,’ she said, suddenly, in quite a different tone to the one in which she had previously agreed to his desire. Then he got up and went away, thinking that it was impossible she could have looked so absurdly hopeful all in a moment if she had not some reasonable foundation for believing that Bathurst was in earnest about her.

‘If Blanche Lyon should elect to go away,’ he said to himself, ‘Trixy would carry the day: he can’t resent the “present” soft influence.’ Then he despised Mr. Bathurst very heartily for that power of loving all that was lovely, which was so eminently characteristic of him, and at the same time made up his mind to adopt all the means he knew, in

order to compass the desirable end of getting Frank Bathurst for a brother-in-law.

Meanwhile, the trio who were left a short time since on the sloping bank, looking at each other, and each wishing that the other was not there to be looked at, had met and spoken as civility dictated, and had withal done these things with a degree of embarrassment that gave a false appearance to what was really an innocent situation. It may fairly be questioned whether anybody ever came abruptly upon a pair of human beings without the surprised and the surpriser looking as if something untoward had occurred. In reality, Blanche Lyon was very glad to see Lionel; his presence relieved her from the necessity of continuing that flow of words without meaning, which she had let loose in order to save Frank from going too far and putting an end to their cordial relations as at present existing. Perhaps there is no greater bore to the woman who does not want to marry him, than that a man she likes should persist in hovering perilously near the brink of that precipice—a proposal. His attentions, his devotion, his warm regard, are all such pleasant things that she cannot help wishing to keep them on as they are. But the serious offer of his hand and heart is quite another matter, one that intensifies the poetry of the proceeding only to kill it the more effectually. For I hold it true that as it is impossible for a woman to think other than warmly and kindly of a man who has let her know that he loves her, so it is impossible for a man to think other than harshly of a woman who has suffered him to drift into the declaration when she can make him no fitting return. In the court of love there is no appeal against love turned to hate, wounded vanity, and the sense of having been lured into a false position. Blanche Lyon recognised these truths, and so, as she did care very much for Frank Bathurst's liking and regard, she was glad that, though he had very distinctly given her to understand that he loved her, he had not put her in the place of

either having to reject or accept his love as a thing which must last her all-sufficiently through time.

Still, though she was glad the interruption had come, she wished it had come in another form than in the person of Lionel Talbot. She knew very well that he was not at all the sort of man who sighs for that which ought not in honour to be his; he had not at all the order of mind which covets his neighbour's possessions. For some men's minds, the fact of there being a *souçon* of doubt as to the ultimate end of their endeavours to create interest in the breasts of the women who most interest them, has a fatal fascination. For Lionel Talbot Blanche Lyon feared it would have none. He was not one to sigh to prove himself a stronger man than the one already in occupation of that citadel which, according to his creed, could only be fairly rendered up once—a woman's heart. He would be incapable of running a race for any favour with any man, more especially with his old friend, Blanche thought, sadly, even as she talked brightly to both the men as they walked one on either side of her up to the house.

Without being deceitful or desperately wicked, Blanche's heart was made of the material that never suffers its owner to say die while a possibility of living exists. Even when she was miserable she would seem to be happy, partly out of pride for herself, and partly out of good feeling for others. 'I cannot bear to be pitied for being depressed, or to depress others by looking downhearted,' was the reason she had once given when rebuked for an external air of joyousness that did not accord with what her mamma declared she ought to be feeling on some melancholy subject. So now, in accordance with the dictates of this considerate creed, she seemed to be very much at ease, very gay and full of vivacity, when she was in reality restless, nervous, and unhappy.

One of the chief causes of her disquiet was that, after this, her relations with Frank would of necessity be altered. She thought that it

would be impossible for him to be as he had been before with her. Though he had saved himself from actually asking her such a direct question as would have involved her giving him a direct answer, he had suffered such a tone to creep into the conversation as could have left no reasonable doubt in the mind of either as to the other having perfectly understood the position. And she was sorry for this, more sorry than she would have been had she more clearly fathomed Frank Bathurst's mind and feelings. It was not in him to give serious thought to what was over or to what was inevitable; it was not in him to regret anything for long, or to bemoan himself for having wandered into any sort of error, provided he could get out of it gracefully. On this occasion he told himself, with some truth, that he had got out of it gracefully. The sweet things he had said to Blanche would never be regretted by him; he was far too gallant to repent him of the utterance of tender words to a woman.

Moreover, as he walked on by her side, looking down upon her bare head as she moved it in its uncovered glory from side to side, alternately addressing Lionel and himself, as she did this, and he was struck afresh by the beauty of her rounded cheek and clearly cut profile, he felt far from sure that he had made a mistake after all. Blanche was just the sort of woman to exact a considerable amount of wooing before she would show herself ready to be won; she would never make a mistake and show that she expected something serious when there was nothing serious coming; she would use her womanly prerogative to the full; freely as she might flirt, she would not go out meekly half-way to meet an offer of marriage. All these things he told himself, recovering his spirits most perfectly during the telling, waxing more charming and satisfactory to himself and his companions as he became more charmed and satisfied each instant with the view of the case which he was offering for his own inspection. He banished all memory of the advice Blanche had

given him, the advice that he should gain Miss Talbot's heart if he could. At least he only remembered it as a superfluous sort of thing, reminding himself as he did so that signs were not wanting to prove that the 'endeavour' would be a work of supererogation, since Trixy's heart was already manifestly well-disposed towards him. Trixy Talbot had it not in her to carry on the war against an intruder's suspicion of his intrusion on a secluded scene being an untoward event, in the way Blanche was doing it now. He could but admire her, and her perfect acting of a part for which she would never have been cast if the choice had been given her.

One grand condition of woman's success was always hers; she dressed with a perfect taste that always gave her a feeling of security and ease. She never permitted herself to be liable to the weakening influence of the knowledge that her effort was marred by an ungraceful line or an unbecoming colour. It is next to impossible for a woman to be anything but awkward in a costume that violates the harmony of either proportion or hue. Blanche never did herself so much injustice as to let herself be put at such a disadvantage.

So now she moved along secure in the primary condition of ease—she knew that from every point of view she looked well. Her luxuriant rippling hair was banded with fillets of the palest clearest mauve ribbon; her transparent floating dress was of the same colour; her waist was well defined by a satin band, and the lace round her throat and wrists was narrow, neat, and straight enough to satisfy the most rigidly tidy. As she walked she raised her dress a little in front, and then coming out from under the white drapery were seen a pair of small, highly-arched feet cased in black-ribbed silk shoes. Both these men who looked upon her were artists, and though one preferred painting wild waves to women, it was hard to say whose taste she most thoroughly satisfied.

'Did you ride far, Frank?' Lionel asked, as they got themselves in

line and turned towards the house. Then he remembered that his question might seem to them to savour of a desire to know how long they had been together, and he was hastening to add, 'I mean how did she carry you?' when Blanche calmly answered—

'He could not have ridden far, for he has been back with me a long time. I went out to the stable-yard to meet him, and then was gracious enough to come on here, risking a sun-stroke without my hat; you never can be sufficiently grateful to me, Frank.'

She said this by way of proving to Lionel that there really was nothing behind this outward show which had evidently rather discomposed him when he came upon them by the lake. He will understand that if there were anything particular to me in Frank's having come back to me soon, that I should not have mentioned, she thought, and simultaneously Lionel was thinking, She is honest, at least; she wishes me to at once understand the terms they stand on with each other.

'I rode far enough to find the mare perfect, worthy even of the one for whom I design her.'

'What a conventional expression, Frank; I hope the one for whom you design her will give more of her attention to the gift than to the manner of the giving unless you strike out some more original form of words.'

'You are the best judge of that.'

'Of what? How vague you are; well, never mind your meaning now; I want to say something to Mr. Talbot while I remember it; how very few people speak closely—say just what they mean, and no more.'

'Edgar does, I think,' Lionel replied.

'Yes, Edgar, Mr. Talbot, does indeed; he says out his meaning a little more plainly than is well at all times; Frank never does, of course not; he flatters, don't you, Frank?' she questioned, laughingly.

'You say so.'

'And yours is not close to your meaning conversation, Mr. Talbot,'

she continued; 'it's suggestive talk—the best of all.'

'Now that you come to critically analyse the nature of my conversation, I remember that I say very little,' Lionel replied.

'Shows what an attentive listener you have in Miss Lyon that that little has made such an impression on her,' Frank Bathurst put in, good-humouredly. There was an utter lack of jealousy, and of all the littlenesses that proceed from jealousy, about this man that was infinitely taking.

'I like suggestive talk and suggestive verse,' Blanche went on, stoutly disregarding Frank's implication; 'that is why I like "The Wanderer," and all the rest of his books.'

'All the rest of whose books? "The Wanderer's?" I don't know him.'

'No, Owen Meredith's.'

Frank laughed, and affected to shiver.

'Save me from suggestions of early loves with primrose faces who suddenly start up from graves under cypress trees to disturb a man's peace of mind when he is enjoying "Trovatore" in Paris; you have a ghoulish taste if you incline to him—I am not with you there.'

'Are you not with me in my admiration—no, not my admiration—my love for that poem, Mr. Talbot?'

He shook his head.

'I don't think I either love or admire the mixture of the very commonplace and the impossible.'

'But then nothing commonplace has a place in that poem; it's all love, and luxury, and light.'

Lionel laughed.

'The love of Paris, and the light of gas, and the luxury an upholsterer's apprentice can catalogue; no, no, it's garish; you will feel it to be so if you compare it with the supernatural element that comes out so gravely in "Faust," for instance; there is a noble suggestiveness about that which all who run cannot read, unfortunately.'

'Say fortunately, rather. "Faust" is not for the masses,' Blanche said, letting her head go up haughtily.

'Pardon me, it is for all humanity;

it is like one of the great Bible stories to me—a thing to be read humbly and solemnly.’

‘Fancy reading anything that a man wrote who was addicted to heartrending flirtations between high rows of well-covered pea-sticks, with plump German maidens, humbly and solemnly!’ Frank said, scoffingly.

‘He was essentially human,’ Blanche said, apologetically; ‘for all his great genius one can get near to him after reading that wonderful biography—he was so very human.’

‘He was essentially selfish,’ Frank put in, warmly, ‘and rather mean about it, I can’t help thinking, after reading that wonderful biography which has turned your brain a little, Blanche: whenever distracted maidens or prudent parents sought to bring him to book, he took refuge in the clouds, as it were, soared up to Parnassus, and roosted there until the storm blew over.’

‘His shortcomings ought to be glossed over, ought they not, Mr. Talbot?’ Blanche asked.

‘I think not,’ he replied; ‘surely not “glossed over;” you do not mean that; but regarded as evidences of how the mighty may fall, and as special reasons for lesser ones to continually pray against being led into temptation.’

‘After all, genial follies are readily forgiven,’ Frank said, with an abrupt change of feelings about the subject under discussion.

‘Yes, by those who do not suffer from them,’ Blanche said, hoping that the amendment would find favour in Lionel’s eyes.

‘And even by those who do suffer from them; they blamed not the bard, though he did them most frightfully amiss,’ Frank put in, affably; ‘he was his own ideal man, and he makes the ideal woman wait for him in her dying agony—those last words! it was worth being born to have heard them.’

‘Last words! how grand some such utterances have been! “More light.” The sentence is a poem in itself.’

‘The craving for fuller intellectual satisfaction, for clearer mental vision, appeals to you,’ Lionel said

to Blanche. ‘Do you remember some that are equally striking in a simpler way?—the last words of the Christian gentleman who said in his dying hour to his son-in-law, “Be good, my dear!” I like them better than any others I have ever heard; they are in themselves a full, perfect, and sufficient rule of life—it’s all summed up in those four simple words.’

‘After all, it is easy enough,’ Frank said, in his softest tones, and with his suavest smile; ‘it is my opinion that the temptations to go astray are extraordinary. I very rarely leave undone what I ought to do, and I don’t think I sigh to do what I ought not, and I am not exceptional.’

‘You are exceptionally well satisfied with your own success in doing right,’ Blanche replied, ‘and that is a fault to start with.’

‘Never mind, I mean well,’ Frank answered; ‘we all mean well, especially your mamma, Blanche.’

Blanche smiled and frowned.

‘I wish we all meant as well as mamma,’ she said, soberly; ‘we should not, in that case, mystify one another painfully for long—’

‘Are we any of us mystifying each other painfully now, may I ask?’ Mr. Bathurst interrupted. ‘I think that at least I am free of that charge. I am open as the day; no one could long be in doubt as to my intentions about anything.’

‘You are advancing your claim to the sin of conceit every moment, is he not, Mr. Talbot? Now I will name another of your faults for your penitential consideration—you are lazy, otherwise the second subject from “Tannhäuser” would be finished by this—’

‘Which I deny. I am acting on the advice of the disinterested critics, who so strenuously recommended me to lie fallow for a time. By Jove! if the law of compensation works at all, what warm quarters will be awarded by-and-by to some of those fellows who have most persistently thrown cold water on aspiring art and literature.’

‘We shall be better for it in the future,’ Lionel said, including himself, by the speech in the castigation

which Frank implied that he had received at critical hands.

'You need not,' Blanche said, quickly and unadvisedly.

He looked gratefully at her; but at the same time he gave her back her flattery by saying—

'If you could make me believe that, Miss Lyon, you would rob me of the aim that is best worth living for—the desire and the hope of advancing. I shall have lived my life, and lived it to miserable purpose, when I shall sit down satisfied with what I have done!'

'You will be satisfied with what you have done, if, two years hence, you can get ten thousand pounds for one picture, for the central figure of which your wife has sat for a model,' Frank said, going round and leaning his arm on his friend's shoulder.

'That is your low view of it. Mr. Talbot will want more, and will get more than you can realize or imagine.'

'You are a nice sybil when you peer into the future for him. From my low and sordid point of view ten thousand pounds is not so despicable, and I can perfectly realize its delights.'

'Mercenary-minded man! You to set up a claim for being an æsthetic artist, and not to hope for something far above gold for your friend!'

'The smiles and approbation of Miss Lyon!'

'He has them already,' Blanche said, coldly.

"And woman's smile for ever hath
A spell to make ambition sleep,"

somebody has said. Avoid the danger, Lal!

'No woman's smile will make his ambition sleep,' Blanche answered, interlacing her fingers, and putting them up before her eyes to make a more complete screen from the sun, as they came out on to the open lawn close to the house, 'because any woman whose smile he could care for would wake his ambition even more if possible; would it not be so, Mr. Talbot?'

'If she cared to do so,' he replied. 'But I think some mistake was made

in the incantation yesterday. The spell you tried to throw over Frank has fallen on me instead.'

'What portion of it?' she asked, with a glowing face.

'No woman's love shall light on thee,
No woman's heart be thine.'

She trembled in every nerve as he spoke, and had she been alone with him she would have spoken some words then that would have broken the ice between them, dissolved the spell he named, and brought a kinder one into being. But Frank was round by her side again, and so she could only hope that silence would indeed be golden.'

So she stood for a few moments, wishing and willing, with all the force of her soul and mind, that something would occur to take Frank away from them, if only for a minute. This opportunity passed, the passion which possessed her might pass into a phase of fear of results from which she was strangely free at this moment. It seemed to her that a crisis had come now when she might fairly give some unmistakable sign of her love for Lionel, without compromising her feminine delicacy and dignity. But she could not do it with Frank standing by; and Frank looked so well inclined to stand by the whole time.

'Thou art so near, and yet so far.'

she half sang. 'Do you know that song, Mr. Talbot?'

'Yes; Frank sings it,' he replied; and Frank, on this, began—

'Beloved eye, beloved star,
Thou art so near, and yet so far,'

in a voice that, Orpheus-like, might have softened the rocks and trees; but that, as evidencing the probability of his remaining longer with them, hardened Miss Lyon's heart against him yet more and more.

CHAPTER XX.

CAUSE FOR DOUBT.

Given certain conditions, and every woman, however little of a diplomatist she may be naturally, will make a subtle scheme, and carry it with a bold stroke. Blanche Lyon

bore the restraint until she could bear it no longer, and then, the conditions being granted, she developed and executed her scheme in an instant.

'Frank,' she exclaimed, suddenly, 'will you do me a great favour?'

'Will I not? What is it?'

'Go and look for a copy of that song that is set for two voices—you will find it in the leather case on the piano—and persuade Miss Talbot to come out here and sing it with me.'

Frank lounged forward a few steps towards the door. Then he evolved a better plan, as he thought, and lounged back again.

'You had better come in; it requires the accompaniment?'

She seated herself on the base of a huge stone vase, full of geraniums. 'I have made up my mind to sing it out here,' she said, resolutely. 'No, Mr. Talbot, don't you go, please. I have also made up my mind to exercise so much cousinly authority as to make Frank fetch me one little song when I ask him.'

'Frank resigns himself entirely to your commands. Being a gone coon, I have no appeal.'

'Fulfil the whole of your mission, now,' Blanche cried after him. 'Persuade Miss Talbot to come, or the copy for two voices will be no use.'

'I fly,' he shouted back, laughingly; and then he went on into the house, and Lionel and Blanche were alone at last. She was mistress of the position, and still she could not seize it.

If only he would have looked at her! But he did not. He stood looking away into the distance, with a quiet, earnest expression of face, that made her fear that she was not in his thoughts—a far-off look, an absorbed look—and Frank would be sure to be back in a minute.

'Mr. Talbot!'

He looked round at her now, as she sat leaning forward, her arms folded on her lap, her head thrown up, and her eyes earnestly bent upon him. As he met her gaze she was satisfied of one thing, and that was that however it had been a moment before, she was very much in his thoughts now.

'You have been with your brother' (she could not dash at her subject, and give him the word that should be a sign of her love, as she intended), 'and you have heard—'

She paused. She meant that he had heard of Edgar's ruin; and the thought of that ruin, and all the evil train of consequences it might bring upon the Talbots, choked her. He attributed her emotion to the wrong cause; he thought she meant to offer some explanation to him, as Edgar Talbot's brother, as to her rejection of Edgar Talbot's offer. So when she paused he said—

'Yes, he told me, and I am very sorry for him. I feel for him very deeply and truly.'

'And not for yourself at all?'

He coloured fast and furiously, up even to his brow, at her question; it seemed to him such a strange one to come from Blanche on such a subject as he believed her to be speaking of.

'For myself, I can bear the hardest things.'

'I know that; and bear them beautifully. As I said to your brother, when—when he was speaking to me the other night, women's words, and ways, and wills, are so weak, when we would give our life to serve, we can do nothing but sorrow.'

He began to understand her now, and to feel that she was more directly referring to their loss of worldly wealth, and to the possible blight it might be on his career.

'Sorrow and you should not be named on the same day, Miss Lyon; but your sympathy is very sweet to me.'

'Sorrow and I have clasped hands often,' she answered soberly. 'You do not quite realize that I have had all my life to take most earnest heed and thought for myself and others. I seem to you to be—just what I seem, in fact.'

'And you can be nothing better.' There was no idle flattering tone in his words. She knew that he meant them thoroughly, and her heart beat high. 'You can feel that, and say it of me? Then I have not lived, and striven, and endeavoured to "be good," in vain.'

'Nor would it have been in vain even if I had not felt that truth and worded it,' he said, kindly. 'My approbation would have been a mean guerdon to strive for.'

'The best I could have.' Then she rose up, and temptation never came to a man in a fairer guise than it did to Lionel Talbot then, to speak out and tell her that he loved her. But he wrestled with it for two or three reasons; amongst others, this lately-born one, that, while his sisters needed his aid, he must not charge himself with a wife, even if the woman he wanted was willing to be that wife. So he struggled to seem indifferent to that which almost upset his judgment, as Blanche made a step or two towards him, telling him that his approbation was the best guerdon she could have—and meaning it too; of that he felt convinced.

'Oh, gentle time, give back to me one hour which thou hast taken! Blanche often thought in after days, when she recalled this hour, and the poor use she had been enabled to make of it. For at this juncture Frank and Beatrix came out to them, Frank hilariously carolling, as became one who was never defeated, never heart-sick, never doubtful as to the blooming issue of all his brightest hopes. And Beatrix, with the unsatisfied look on her face that is indicative of feeling aggrieved with oneself for one's weakness in granting the small requests of the loved one who abstains from making large demands. It was impossible for Beatrix to refuse any favour or concession asked of her by Frank; and she knew that it was, and was indignant with herself for its being so; and still she could not help herself, but went whithersoever, and did whatsoever he asked of her. It was stinging to her, this being looked up and required at the last, when Frank had been away for a whole sunny hour (perfectly oblivious of her) by the lake with Blanche. It came even to the true-hearted, noble-natured Trixy to hate Blanche, as she came upon the latter 'standing and charming Lionel,' as Trixy worded the situation to herself, when Mr. Bathurst

was not by. She did not suppose for one instant that Blanche was in an equally evil case with herself. Our own private grief is always the mightiest in the world, before which all others dwarf themselves to the meanest proportions.

'I am not very much in the mood for singing, but I came out, as you sent for me,' Trixy said, as she came up to them; and then Blanche, who really could afford to be generous and tolerant towards Trixy, put her hands kindly on the girl's shoulders and said, almost in a whisper—

'Please don't think me heartless and thoughtless, dear, but your brother will not bear this bad blow the better for seeing you depressed by it; forgive me if I seem to think less sorrowfully of it than I have thought—will you, will you?'

She was so strangely winning as she spoke in her earnest, pleading tones, with all the force of her earnest, winning beauty, that Trixy felt much happier.

'I think I could forgive you almost anything,' she said, affectionately, and Blanche laughed, and replied—

'In that one little speech you made a couple of provisos; however, forgive me for having sent for you now, and let me sing second to you.'

They sang the song 'gloriously,' as Frank declared, and again he found himself very strongly directed towards Miss Talbot. At any rate, there was time enough, he told himself, to make resolutions and carry them when the glorious summer, during which one should only feel and exist, was over. So the sybarite snatched the hour, and pleased himself according to his wont in being very pleasant to them both. And Blanche's heart ached horribly because she saw that Lionel fancied she overrated her gay cousin's devotion.

By-and-by Mrs. Lyon came home from her tour of inspection over the cottage that was to let in the village. 'It was the very thing she should like for herself,' she said, 'and she was almost sorry that anybody else should be going to live there; the garden was the very style of garden that was most pleas-

ing to her, and the greenhouse would be lovely when repaired; as to the house, well, she never had liked London houses, and she should like them now less than ever: give her a place in the country where you were not overlooked, that was all she asked.

'I think I should like it too,' Beatrix said, demurely.

'Get your brother to take it for your autumn quarters, Miss Talbot,' Frank exclaimed. He had yet to learn that some such change of residence would be a matter of necessity, not choice, with the Talbots.

'Do you know,' Blanche whispered to Beatrix, 'that it will be just as well to manage all this without telling the truth to mamma? I know everything, Trixy dear, and I thought of sending mamma to look at that house for an imaginary friend; the concealment is harmless enough. Do you agree to letting her think that her wishes weigh in the matter?'

'If that plan is decided upon,' Trixy said, dubiously; and as the other three were all speaking animatedly at once on the superior advantages of the country over the town, the conversation between the two girls was unheard.

'Why should it not be decided upon?' Blanche questioned, eagerly. 'If you like it, why should you not stay here where you can have human companionship when you feel inclined? Mr. Talbot wishes my mother to live with you still; it would be very dull for you in a strange country place with her alone; here you will have my cousin and your brother Lionel often.'

'And you always?' Trixy tried to say it joyfully.

'No, indeed, me but very rarely; I shall go out in the world again.'

Trixy's eyes questioned 'Why?'

'Oh, it's not only men who must work in these nineteenth century days,' Blanche said, smiling; 'I rather like the necessity, too. I believe I have more of the bee than the butterfly in me.'

'Then I shall lose you,' Trixy said.

Blanche looked grave.

'Will you promise never to lose

your liking for me?—I am very greedy of that.'

'There is nothing that could happen that could make me not like you, I think,' Beatrix replied, and she did not quite mean what she said.

'There can nothing happen to give you cause for liking me less,' Blanche answered, heartily; and she did mean what she said, and did wish to give Beatrix some comforting assurance respecting Frank at the same time. Then they all got themselves together again, and talked about the cottage in the village, which, to use Mrs. Lyon's words, 'was the very place she wished to live and die in.' And presently Edgar came out to join them, and it was proposed and carried by universal consent that they should all drive down after luncheon and judge of the merits of the dwelling for themselves.

'I have heard from Marian to-day,' Edgar Talbot said, when luncheon was nearly over. 'She pretends to be in great distress about her husband's niece; there was some sort of understanding or engagement between the girl and some young fellow in the country, and, as usual, Mrs. Sutton has marred the harmony.'

'What has she done?' they all asked, eagerly. The tale of how the course of true love has been made to run roughly always meets with an attentive audience.

'Oh, she speaks as the injured one—a sure sign with Marian that she has been very much to blame. Even Mark is angry, and that is a state of things that does not at all agree with Mrs. Sutton.'

'Your sister is one of the most fascinating women I ever met,' Frank Bathurst said, good-naturedly.

'So I have heard,' Edgar replied. 'Well, her latest fascinations have been exercised in making a good, honest, foolish young fellow unhappy, and in proving to him that "every woman is a rake at heart;" we have every reason to be proud of our sister's genius for making people miserable.'

He spoke very bitterly, for

Marian's letter had been very bitter to him. She had reviled him for that which he could not help, his own ruin, namely, and she had upbraided him for having wasted her husband's and her husband's sister's money. After a page or two of this matter she had gone on to tell him how a misunderstanding had arisen between her niece Ellen and the young man to whom Ellen was engaged, and she had appended to this statement a sentence which had grated more harshly than all her revilings upon her brother's feelings.

'He came up to town a day or two ago to reproach me, I believe; but unwittingly I gave a sop to

Cerberus, and now he would undergo the tortures of a row with his ladylove every week, provided the reconciliation scene may take place under my auspices; he is really a perfect Apollo, and only wants polishing to make him the most perfect cavalier in the row.'

This was the paragraph in her letter that most sorely wounded her brother; these were the sentiments that made him say bitterly that they had every reason to be proud of Marian. It seemed good to Lionel to change the topic, which he did by asking—

'How shall we divide ourselves to go down to the village?'



LEAVING THE CONFESSIONAL.

(ILLUSTRATED FROM THE PAINTING BY TISSOT.)

IF, in these days of blaze and gold,
 When strength is wed to all things fair;
 When flowers and promised fruit enfold
 The first set primehood of the year;
 When lusty, June stalks largely forth
 With bright defiant step that spurs,
 Crushing the creatures of the north,
 And all the vanquished east o'erturns :
 If, whilst he walks the earth, begirt
 With Iris' jewelled wonders seven,
 Beauty dropped from his shining skirt,
 Then rose to float, 'twixt earth and heaven :
 If, for the young god's lonely state
 A pagan pity turned to thee,
 Worship would name his fitting mate—
 Thyself, as pure and grand as he.
 If, in some undimmed Paradise,
 Virgin of blight and cloud and storm,
 A glorious vision met our eyes,
 The vision of thy peerless form ;
 Our reverent tongue had straight confessed
 The angel-spirit of the place,
 That, where it flitted, all things blessed
 With stainless peace and spotless grace.
 Or if, within a lower world,
 Where in their vain and painted pride
 The insects of an hour were hurled
 Now here, now there, by Fashion's tide ;
 Where brightest eyes were wild with praise ;
 Where ears on fabled passions hung ;
 Feigned raptures sprang at beauty's gaze,
 And flattery was the vulgar tongue :
 There, where the hands of pleasure tossed
 Time's gilded shuttle to and fro ;
 Where changing lights the fabric crossed—
 Lights of the stall, the rout, the Row ;
 What wonder if our voice we lift
 Contagious to the wild acclaims
 That before judgment gave thee shrift,
 And ranked thee with the saintliest names ?
 We *think* thee perfect ; but the thought,
 We know, is secular and profane ;
 And thou, by conflict better taught,
 Deemest our random fancies vain.
 For thou hast communed with thy heart,
 Mourning thy slow and alien will ;
 And from the glare of life apart,
 Hast pondered pensive, sad, and still.
 We would not ask what sins to heaven
 Thou hast in penitence deplored ;
 Content to trust thee fully shriven
 Of fault, of deed, intent, or word.
 For oh ! we cannot choose but trust
 The heart that pardon meekly bears,
 In the High Court is counted just
 And pure as are an angel's tears.

F. S.



From the painting by Titoni.

LEAVING THE CONFESSIONAL.



ENGAGED!



INTERRUPTED!

‘ENGAGED! Oh, indeed! And pray what then, sir?’

‘What then, sir? Why, then there is no more insufferable condition for other people than to have to stand by and be spectators of their happiness!’

There is something, after all, in what my friend says, though it can scarcely be supposed he is absolutely serious, considering the advantageous match his daughter, Miss Lucy, has really made of it. That fact being assured, however, he sticks to his point about the discomfort he experiences in being

a compulsory witness to ‘their extravagant affection.’ ‘My good friend, you forget. So many things have occupied your attention since the day when you were first admitted to the family circle as the “engaged” of dear Amelia—you seem almost to forget that “dear Amelia” and your excellent wife, “a joyful mother of children,” are one and the same person—that you forget both the joy that was yours, and the “insufferable condition” that joy occasioned to the members of your innamorata’s family, who received you so kindly. Pray let us

hear no more about "extravagant affection." I am as old as you are, and remember well—for was I not, at the very time, in a green and yellow melancholy, sighing for the affections of your dear Amelia's sister Mary, who jilted me in favour of Jack Hornby, the mustachioed and bearded man of war? I remember how eminently ridiculous you were wont to appear to us, who saw not with your eyes, upon almost every occasion when you and dear Amelia figured in public. I will not harrow your feelings by describing what indications of "extravagant affection" you gave when I came unawares, and assuredly without intending it, upon a certain arbour in the garden, where you and yours had sole possession, one Sunday evening in the summer, as I returned from a solitary, unlovely walk. Shall I remind you of the many shifts, more or less flimsy and transparent, with which, many a time and oft, you tried to make your occupation appear other than it had been, before you were interrupted by the unwelcome entrance of a third person into the room? Cannot your memory carry you back so far as to the time when you seriously proposed to challenge my cousin Tom, because he, all ignorant of your engagement, dared to take your dear Amelia from under your very eyes, and to waltz with her as he might have done with any young lady whatever? I can remind you, if need be, of the time when you poured out your soul in grief to me, because you were not oftener left alone with your *carissima*, and because her worthy father, a thousand times more amiable than you are, was inconsiderate enough occasionally to require the use of his own study, which, for reasons best known to you and Amelia, was your favourite billing and cooing place.'

Long ago, Charles Lamb raised his voice against the pretensions of the newly married, and held them up to scorn in various ways, in return for indignities which he had suffered at their hands; but the claims and self-assertions of the would-be married have gone on unchecked since long before Lamb's

time until now. With the single exception of the bard who Bon Gaultier hight, and who sang in moving verse the miseries of the lover's friend and confidant, no one has ventured to handle the delicate subject of the conduct of engaged people, either towards each other or towards other people. It is a delicate subject, to be sure, and a man might be excused for refraining to bring in the mirth-makers, who haply might select himself for the immediate subject of their laughter. There are so few who can afford to raise a laugh on this subject, so few who have not, once at least in their lives, to pass through the love-making stage, and so to appear, as they say, ridiculous in the eyes of other people. It is a privilege which only old bachelors like myself—I never recovered the blow my young affections received when the beauteous Mary, sister of 'dear Amelia,' threw me overboard for the mustachioed and bearded man of war aforesaid—enjoy. We have a fee simple in the follies and extravagancies both of those who are married, and of those who are about to take upon them the holy estate of matrimony; we can with impunity let 'our jest among our friends be free,' and in the matter of courtship—as they used to call it in my young days—we have a right to comment upon it as we like, because of the completeness with which we are excluded from the joys of it. I hold that my friend, who grumbles at the 'insufferable condition' in which he is placed, is quite out of court. He does but see the reflection of his former self; it is an instance of the thing that hath been being the same that shall be; and, so far as he is concerned by it, there is no new thing under the sun. With me it is different. Though once in my life, as I have already hinted, I 'sat, like patience on a monument,' smiling at the grief which the mustachioed and bearded man of war caused me in the matter of Mary, sister to 'dear Amelia,' I sighed to myself only, without declaring my passion, and had not, therefore, to go through any public exhibitions of 'extravagant affection,' such as,

doubtless, I should have done had I been admitted to *pratique*, and had the Fates been kinder to me than they were. Thus, you see, gentle readers, I am at liberty to make any remarks I please upon the situation. No one can meet me with a *tu quoque*, or declare me estopped from using as freely as I like the gleanings of my experience. Let my friend therefore, for decency's sake, stand aside, and let me take his place. I am vain enough to think I shall treat the matter with a hand more tender and more sympathetic than his, while I shall not the less expose what he would in his unamiability tear to tatters.

There is, then, to be noticed in the carriage and deportment of engaged persons an amount of awkwardness and restraint in the presence of other people, which not only stamp them for what they are, but tend to make the whole party amongst whom they find themselves perfectly uncomfortable. Strangers—that is to say, any people but the two who are interested in maintaining the monopoly of mutual 'extravagant affection'—feel almost guilty at being the occasion of so much discomfort. They do not want to obtrude themselves on the attention of the loving pair; and assuredly, if their own personal comfort were alone concerned, they would get far out of sight of the enamoured; but circumstances will not admit of it; there must be certain rooms in common at certain times—under no circumstances, for instance, do lovers, love they never so lovingly, quite dispense with the service of the dining-room. Common civility, moreover, requires that occasionally they should be in the drawing-room, or other place where the other members of the family are assembled; and it is on each and all of these occasions that the characteristics above mentioned are noticeable. There is in the manner and on the face of Amandus an expression half of listlessness, half of anxiety to be agreeable in spite of himself, which strikes a disinterested observer rather curiously. He begins to think that Amandus is

unwell, that he is a genius pondering abstruse questions 'even in the presence,' or may be the thought crosses his brain, as he sees the continuousness of Amandus's absence of mind, that perchance he may have committed some crime which makes him ill at ease. Only one who is cognizant of the true state of the case can rightly interpret the meaning of that shifting glance of the eyes, that perpetual wandering to and fro the beloved object, who sits uncomfortably upon some neighbouring chair or sofa, and tries to play the hypocrite, though with as poor a result as Amandus. As plainly as the expression on an intelligent being's countenance can convey a meaning, so plainly is it apparent to the disinterested unappropriated that Amandus is chafing on the bit which good manners have forced into his mouth, and that he is wishing with all his heart he had wings like a bird, that he might fly into the study or the breakfast-room, where he would be with Amanda. What pleasure, what satisfaction there can be in thus secluding himself with Amanda I do not pretend to say. Would it not seem more glorious to stay in the midst of the family circle, and triumph openly and continuously in the conquest you have won? Or are there sweet mysteries, solemn rites of courtship, which none but the initiated may know, and which must be performed in so private a manner, that the sudden entry of a Philistine into the room is enough to scare the votaries of Cupid from their vow-making, and to cause a trepidation that is observable long after the invader has entered? I presume it must be so, else there could not be so great, so manifest a desire on the part of Amandus and Amanda, and on the part of Amanda's father before them, as I have already testified, to get away to some covert from the common gaze.

'Not that room! They are in there!'

'Confound them! Suppose they are? My "Encyclopædia Britannica" is in there too; and surely I may go and fetch it!'

'My dear sir, you are too violent, and too inconsiderate as well. At all events, make a noise with the door-handle, so as to give some warning of your coming.'

My friend feels the awkwardness of having his own study as effectually sealed against him as if the Customs officers had found out that he had an illicit distillery in it: he resents what he calls an encroachment on his liberty; but the noise he has made in stumbling over the door-mat, and in fumbling with the door-handle, has put 'the pair' sufficiently on the *qui vive* to allow of their quitting the celebration of those rites unknown to all but the initiated, and my friend enters his study to find his large easy chair vacant, but looking as if it had not long been so, drawn up in a comfortable position on one side of the fireplace, while Amandus, who might be suspected of having sat therein, is busy seeing 'why the lamp burns so dimly,' and Amanda, at the other end of the room, is so ostentatiously engaged in looking over some music, that one is bound to suppose with Longfellow that 'things are not what they seem.' It does not require one thoroughly acquainted with the rites of Dan Cupid to conjecture that Amandus and Amanda had been differently occupied ere that fumbling with the door-handle warned them of the fact that a Philistine was approaching.

'Two are company, three none,' says Marian, when it is proposed that she shall go with Amandus and Amanda to the croquet party at Mrs. Thingumby's. 'You are quite right, my dear;' only there is the slightest possible tinge of dissatisfaction in your tone that you are of the three, and not of the two, which leads one to doubt whether your remark is prompted so much by a desire to let the company consist of the only harmonious elements, as by a wish to point uncomfortably towards the composition of the company in order to gratify yourself by enjoying their discomfort. If the tone be rightly interpreted, I will pass by your remark as being merely cynical; if

not, I humbly beg your pardon, and cordially endorse the truism you have uttered. Engaged folk *do*, as a matter of fact, dislike the presence of a third person, almost as much, perhaps more, than that of a large party. 'A great company is a great solitude,' and in it the 'engaged' can be, comparatively speaking, free, almost unnoticed; whereas, in narrower limits they both cause and are required to give a greater attention. I am far from being certain that the condition of the third person who is tacked on to the 'happy pair' is not much more 'insufferable' than theirs. If they so far consider him or her as not to talk about themselves, it will be in so forced and artificial a manner as to make their conversation less tolerable than their silence, or their mutual self-appropriation. With what unblushing selfishness do an engaged couple walk off together, with a *noli nos tangere* expression on their faces, as though they had a monopoly of the earth on which they walk, and would resent any intrusion as the infringement of a patent right. Whilst they choose to walk they are as scarecrows to the timid and the good-natured, who avoid them as tabooed objects, and 'steal away so guilty like,' if perchance they stumble upon them in the course of their perigrinations. My friend, the father of Amanda, speaks very feelingly on this subject. He says his favourite part of the garden is no longer one of his pleasant places; the ivy-grown summer-house, where he was wont to read and smoke a lazy pipe, is no longer available for him since he was foolishly led to sanction the mad engagement which brings his Amanda and her Amandus so much in his way.

He complains, too—and herein, as a calm, dispassionate observer, I am compelled to join with him—of the demonstrativeness of the 'engaged.' 'Positively, sir, I have seen them sitting knee to knee almost, with their hands clasped, their tongues as silent as the grave, their eyes reflecting all sorts of nonsense from one to the other, and looking like the most perfect fools.

that can be met with out of Bedlam.'

Gently, my friend. This fault, this unshamefaced glorying, if you will, is very reprehensible. If it does nothing else it asserts to all present, more plainly than is agreeable, that they are not happy as the engaged are; but there is no need for you to break out into a fury on the subject. I will mention the circumstance in a don't-do-it-again sort of way through the various circles of London Society, and I doubt not you will cease to be troubled by demonstrations of 'extravagant affection.'

Did the captain take Amanda down to dinner? Well, it was very *gauche* in the hostess not to have arranged differently; but there is no reason why you, Amandus, should sit savagely all dinner-time, saying nothing whatever to the amiable lady by your side, who is ignorant of your misfortune, and is trying to enlist your sympathies in the last report of the Society for procuring a change in the colour of the Ethiopian's skin. Do not venture to press Amanda's foot, though you may think it to be within reach, under the table. You can assure her of your sentiments towards her as well as of those you entertain towards the captain afterwards. Meantime, though you may think to touch Amanda's foot with your own, it may happen you light accidentally on the captain's, and some embarrassment may ensue.

Why should you be angry because an old friend of Amanda's chooses to talk to her longer than you like? Is it not enough for you that Amanda has preferred you to the old friend, to all her old friends, and only wishes not to make *them* feel the preference too keenly? Go to; you are unreasonable!

Again, while I recommend you not to wear your heart on your sleeve for daws to peck at, or, in other words, not to flaunt your engagement in everybody's face, be particularly careful how you inflict upon your friends the story 'How you did thrive in this fair lady's love, and she in yours.' Your lady friends will per-

haps welcome the recital, for their tender, loving natures incline them to listen to a tale of love; but your male friends, glad enough to know that you are happy, will vote you a bore if you give them too many details of your happiness. They will be sure to discount your description of your ladylove; it is ten to one they will make fun of you and of her too, the ungenerous brutes, in the next conversation they have with a mutual friend; they will think but simply of you for talking of that which you should keep as private as possible; and they will wish you at Jericho if you take up much of their time with a matter in which they can have but a specially limited interest.

'It is the most egregious bore
Of all the bores I know.
To have a friend who lost his heart
A short time ago.'

This will be the burden of their song, this will be the true expression of their inmost feelings; and though good-nature may prompt them to bear and forbear, they will assuredly feel aggrieved if you draw, as the custom of lovers is, upon their patience *ad libitum*.

As for Amanda, it would be almost presumptuous in me to offer her any counsel, yet, at the risk of offending so charming a young lady, I will venture to suggest that she should be very chary of confiding too much to her 'dearest Jane' or Lucy. The chances are she will say more than she intended, and there will be some additions made by lively imaginations. Let her remember she has some one else's confidence to keep besides her own. Let not the love of triumph, the communicative springs of happiness, still less the mere love of 'hearing or telling some new thing,' lead her into imparting thoughts which are already 'engaged.' Let her not exult by word or action, as I have seen some do, over her compeers who are unattached; 'there is many a slip,' &c. Above all, let her consider very tenderly the abnormal position in which she and all about her are placed during the term of her engagement—let not that be

long—and let her try to accommodate herself to the convenience—ay, even to the prejudices of those whom she is soon to leave, and to whom she will thereafter be glad that she showed so much consideration and self-denial. Finally, let her not on any account forget to ask me to the wedding. She may rely upon my services in the matter

of giving away, of speech-making, of flinging the slipper, of drying the tears of the respective mothers-in-law, of anything, in short, which may properly and fairly be considered as forming part of the office and duty of the devoted admirer of all Amandas.

F. W. R.





